

VOICES OF LAUREL



FREE
WINTER 2022
VOL. 2, NO. 1

A JOURNALISTIC COLLECTIVE FOR LAUREL, MARYLAND

Woolworth

An Afternoon With the Woolworth Queens

Longtime Laurel coworkers remain in touch

PAGE 16



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LEAD STORIES

2021 City Council Election Results

New Council Is Younger, but With No Women

BY KEVIN LEONARD AND RICHARD FRIEND



James Kole, Keith Sydnor, Mayor Craig Moe, Martin Mitchell, Brencis Smith, and Carl DeWalt PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF LAUREL

Last November’s general election for the Laurel City Council resulted in a much younger council, but without any women. When long-time Councilmembers Mike Leszcz and Valerie Nicholas decided to not run, it opened the door to some new candidates.

Once again, voter turnout was anemic. Out of more than 17,000 registered voters in the city, only about 7% bothered to cast a vote for Mayor or the City Council in the last few elections. The 2021 election was no different, with only about 7% of Laurel’s registered voters casting a ballot.

The official results, as released by the city, are:

At-Large		
Martin Mitchell	55%	722
Fred Smalls	45%	586
Ward 1		
Carl DeWalt*	uncontested	445
James Kole	uncontested	457
Ward 2		
Jeffrey Mills	25%	311
Brencis Smith*	34%	419
Keith Sydnor*	41%	517

*Incumbent

Newcomers Martin Mitchell bested veteran councilman Fred Smalls for the At-Large seat vacated by Nicholas, and James Kole ran unopposed for Leszcz’s seat in Ward 1. Incumbents Carl DeWalt (Ward 1), Brencis Smith (Ward 2), and Keith Sydnor (Ward 2) will join the newcomers. The new council was sworn in on Nov. 22 by Mayor Craig Moe at

City Hall.

The Laurel Board of Election Supervisors conducted the official ballot counting on Nov. 3. Carl DeWalt witnessed the counting, later joined by James Kole and Keith Sydnor. DeWalt praised the diligence and professionalism of the Board: John Kish, Bill Wellford, and Rhonda Whitley, along with Laurel City Clerk Kim Rau.

Councilman DeWalt told *Voices of Laurel*, “On early voting Saturday before the election, they work 7 am to 5 pm. On Election Day, they work 6 am to 9 pm, and the next morning they work from 8 am to 1 pm counting all the provisional, absentee, and mail-in ballots. Kim Rau is in constant communications with the Prince George’s County Board of Elections. I believe only two ballots were rejected for various reasons! Everything they do is very transparent so anyone in the room can witness it.”

Commenting on the election results, Councilman Keith Sydnor told *Voices of Laurel*, “Congratulations to all and looking forward to working with everyone to continue moving our city forward.”

Newly elected James Kole said, “I am very excited for a new council in a new year. I think our new council has a lot of potential to make positive impact on our City.”

New Council President Brencis Smith told us, “I am grateful that the citizens of Laurel chose me again to serve on their behalf. It’s an honor and privilege to be on the Laurel City Council and I am looking forward to getting things done this year as their Councilman and Council President.”

Councilman Martin Mitchell said, “I’m glad my grassroots campaign was well received by the community. Laurel’s a burgeoning city and I can’t wait to see the adventures ahead for the new council and the city.”

Mayor Craig Moe did not respond to a request for comment to *Voices of Laurel*.

Inside: New Neighborhood Columns!

Starting with this issue, *Voices of Laurel* contains columns for specific parts of town. We are very pleased to introduce our newest contributors: Diane Mezzanotte, the South Laurel correspondent and Brenda Zeigler-Riley, who will write the Russett/Maryland City column.

Our neighborhood columnists introduce themselves and their vision for their columns inside this issue.

We are looking for writers to report on the doings in West Laurel, Old Town, and North Laurel/Savage. Make sure your neighborhood is heard!

Please contact us if interested.

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South Laurel

Local news covering the Laurel Lakes, Victoria Falls, Oakcrest, Montpelier, and the Route 197 corridor



BY DIANE MEZZANOTTE | SOUTHLAURELVOICES@GMAIL.COM

Hello, readers! My name is Diane Mezzanotte and I'll be covering the South Laurel area for *Voices of Laurel*. Since this is the inaugural column, I thought I'd introduce myself and share a little of the vision for what I hope this column can do to serve the community.

Originally from Pennsylvania, I've lived in the Oakcrest area of Laurel since 1987. I'm married to Lou, originally from Connecticut, whom I met at work here in Maryland. Our son, Domenic, graduated from the University of Maryland and lives in Odenton. Over the years, Lou and I have been involved with the Laurel Boys and Girls Club, serving as baseball and basketball coaches, and helping with the now-defunct bingo nights. We are members of Bethany Community Church, which met for years just across Route 1 from Oakcrest before building its current church on Riding Stable Road in West Laurel.

I've lived in Laurel longer than I lived in my Pennsylvania hometown, a village called Hampton in rural Adams County. Since most people have never heard of Hampton, PA, I usually say that I grew up near Gettysburg. My little town hasn't even had a post office since 1973, when neighboring New Oxford's postal service took over the rural routes surrounding it. And there is no Hampton High School, either. In rural Pennsylvania, several towns and lots of farming areas feed into a single school district, and most students are bused in. My graduating class had 104 students, only a handful of whom went on to college. As you can see, the area is quite different from Laurel.

I majored in journalism at Penn State, where I also played saxophone in the marching Blue Band. One claim to fame is that legendary Alabama coach Bear Bryant pushed me out of the way so that he could shake hands with Joe Paterno after a game. (I was in my appointed spot within the "post-game concert block" on the field, following the band director's strict orders not to move from position.) I also was an opinion columnist for the university's *Daily Collegian*, so helming this column feels like I've come full circle.

After graduation, I worked as a magazine editor for about a year. I

then went to work for the Department of Defense because, believe it or not, journalism skills were a hot commodity there in the mid-80s. My marching orders were to help DoD writers move away from a wordy, bureaucratic style and implement a more journalistic style and approach. I developed and taught writing classes, mentored scores of junior analysts, and served as an analyst, writer, and editor myself. I consider my career to have been challenging, enjoyable, and successful, and the 34 years I served there seem to have flown by, in hindsight. I retired in late 2019 and was gearing up to start some long-planned travel adventures when Covid-19 rewrote those plans for me. So, I switched gears and focused on my hobbies of knitting, reading, and binge-watching shows that everyone else watched years ago—which means that spoilers have disappeared from my social media feeds! And now I'm happy to be writing again, this time for *Voices of Laurel*.

What Will the South Laurel Column Cover?

First, it should be noted that we are defining "South Laurel" rather loosely. For now, any community south of Cherry Lane will be covered herein, including (but not limited to) Laurel Lakes, Victoria Falls, Oakcrest, and Montpelier. Also, *Voices of Laurel* is intended to serve all of Laurel—not just people within the government-defined city limits. So don't worry about whether your community is technically within the city of Laurel—in fact, mine is not, but I certainly consider myself a Laurelite!

Following the overall vision of this publication, we are seeking stories about people—our neighbors, merchants, public servants—and news from people-focused organizations like schools, churches, non-profits, and more. The goal is to capture what life is like in this part of Laurel at this time in history. Here are some examples of the kinds of items we're looking for:

School news: Is your school holding a fundraiser? Hosting exchange students? Putting on a play or musical or band concert? Did your school's test



DIANE MEZZANOTTE

A new 7-Eleven at 13350 Baltimore Avenue has opened to serve South Laurel.

scores improve over last year? Help us to celebrate and to get the word out about the good things happening in our schools.

Community News: Does your neighborhood hold block parties? Are there any "hometown heroes" worth spotlighting? Did your church host the homeless in the winter? Will the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts be collecting canned goods or holding fundraising events?

People Stories: Do you know someone who is turning 100? Married 50+ years? Did a celebrity visit South Laurel? Stories can be from relatively recent times or date back many years, or you might want to draw attention to a future event in South Laurel, in which case we'd need a few months' lead time.

How Do People Submit Items?

It's easy! Simply email me at SouthLaurelVoices@gmail.com with your news item or story idea. I want to learn as much as possible about the South Laurel community and its residents. Also, stay tuned because by the next issue, I plan to launch a private Facebook group where we can converse with each other, brainstorm story ideas, and crowdsource articles as a community.

So, Hello! I'm Diane. Tell me your story.

New 7-Eleven Opens in South Laurel

In mid-December, a new 7-Eleven opened on the southbound side of

Route 1, between Contee Road and the Maryland National Memorial Cemetery. The new store includes a gas station with 16 pumps, a fairly large convenience store, some fresh food options like packaged salads and yogurts, and hot foods including wings and pizza in addition to the usual rolling-griddle hot dogs.

Local social media reactions to the new store varied. Some neighbors were concerned about increased traffic and more accidents; others thought that having a new option on the southbound side of Route 1, just a few blocks from the existing 7-Eleven on the northbound side in the Oakcrest area, could actually reduce accidents. In theory, there will no longer be a need to make a left turn from the parking lot to the always-busy Route 1 since there is now a 7-Eleven option on both sides of that road.

Time will tell, but in the meantime this South Laurel resident is thrilled that the new store had about a dozen Slurpee flavors to choose from when I visited, and they all were fully frozen and ready to go. It's the little joys in life, and a perfectly mixed Coke Smoothie is one of my guilty pleasures.

Diane Mezzanotte has lived in Laurel since 1987. A graduate of Penn State's School of Journalism, she is happy to return to writing "people stories" after retiring from a 34-year career with the Defense Department.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Russett/Maryland City

Local news covering the Russett and Maryland City areas



BY BRENDA ZEIGLER-RILEY | RUSSETT.MDCINFO@GMAIL.COM

Russett, a creative planned community in the Baltimore/Washington corridor, became a reality in 1991 when Anne Arundel County officials, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Russett developers agreed on establishing the 900-acre mixed-use community in western Anne Arundel County. Surrounded by trees and trails, Russett's distinctive community was initiated with the cattail logo and slogan that says, "Where Nature is Part of the Plan." The park-like environment has 12 miles of walking trails and a 70-acre Oxbow Lake Nature Preserve; the landscaped streets end in cul-de-sacs, towering trees, single-family homes, townhouses, condos, and rental apartments. The various communities are called parcels, and each has a Parcel Representative who serves as a liaison to the Russett Board of Directors. Russett is now home to 13,000 residents and countless businesses.

What residents say...

Terri Hackett, a newbie to Russett, moved to the area in January 2019 after leaving Alabama State University as the Student Ombudsman. She decided not to move back to the property she owns in Beltsville. Instead, she chose Russett because the neighborhood was close to her church and the freeway. "I wanted to live in a warm, inviting neighborhood that had sidewalks. I love this community because of its walking paths and beautiful pool (with too many rules)," she says. I live alone and work from home, and the ability to participate in committees and community activities helps me blossom." She says that Russett is a great place to live and would like to see more residents involved in activities and governance.

Sheri, a resident of Russett since the fall of 2009, moved here to downsize from a single-family home. She "loves this neighborhood because it's dog-friendly, my neighbors are great, and it's well kept, affordable, and in a great location." As a retiree, "I enjoy the spring and fall months when the community holds events and activities, and I can get out and meet new people."

An original owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, has lived in Laurel since the 1970s and in Russett for 23 years when it was a wetland—no Walmart, Sam's, or Corridor Marketplace. In 1998, she ventured to Russett, which was under construction. When she found her home, she says, "walking into a house... gave me so much peace and it feels the same today." She says it reminds her a bit of her hometown—especially the parcel she lives in because it's more like an extended family. Upon retirement, she'd planned to return to the Midwest to be closer to her sisters. Now she says, "I am so at home here that I haven't been able to make a move."

Another original owner, **Demris Lee**, teaches middle school science in Prince George's County and is a native of Prince Georges County. She moved to Russett in 1993 because it was convenient to work and her family, it was affordable, and she loved the styles and layout of the community. She reflects on the changes over the years, such as the addition of a full-service library and tennis courts. She says, "the best thing about Russett is the neighbors, I feel very fortunate to live near kind, helpful neighbors that embody a sense of community. A Chinese Proverb states that 'anyone can buy a good house, but good neighbors are priceless.'"

As a Russett resident, I agree with those I spoke with—Russett is a great place to live!

Caring Cupboard Comes to Russett

Maryland City Library at Russett partnered with The Caring Cupboard 501(c)(3). The Caring Cupboard's mission is to fight food insecurity and help provide food to those in need through Little Free Pantries (LFP) or small food pantries. Donations from residents support the Cupboard and residents in need by placing food in cupboards at the library. Caring Cupboard's motto is "Filling the Cupboard Fills the Heart."

Long-time Maryland City Resident

I spoke with Ray Syzperski, Maryland City resident and Vice President of the Maryland City Civic Association, to discuss the results of a meeting with

Anne Arundel County officials about speeding "muscle cars" careening through Russett and Maryland City. He shared that "things have been relatively quiet after the meeting."

As we continued to talk, I found that Mr. Syzperski is an original resident of Maryland City. And at age 92, Syzperski began to share tidbits of his life from enlisting in the Air Force, his military assignments, and his 50 plus years in Maryland City.

He moved to Maryland City in 1963 because it reminded him of an area in Madison, Wisconsin, where he'd lived for a year during his Air Force days, as well as the fact that it was also close to Fort Meade.

Originally from Buffalo, NY, he "enlisted in the Air Force to fly planes too because his brother flew airplanes." However, during the Cold War, he was told that there was a greater need for linguists as opposed to pilots. So, Mr. Syzperski began his study of the Russian language at Syracuse University. Shortly after, he met his wife of 61 years at a USO in Syracuse, NY. As a translator, he became fluent in Russian, Polish, and German and traveled extensively at home and abroad as a Translator for the Air Force. He retired as

an Air Force Intelligence Officer after 20 years, spent time working for Verizon and retired from the National Security Agency after 21 years.

Syzperski has been active in Maryland City since his early days. He was a founding member of Resurrection of Our Lord Church when the first services were held in Maryland City homes. He shared that as the "congregation grew, the church rented a space in the Daily Double Bingo Hall fondly known as 'St. Bingo's' to celebrate Sunday Mass." Later the congregation moved to Resurrection Horse Farm, where they eventually bought land to build the Resurrection of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church on Brock Bridge Road.

Deeply involved in the Maryland City/Russett corridor, he is also on the Board of Directors of Monarch Global Academy and a Laurel Park Impact Committee member. When asked if he'd consider moving, Syzperski said, "I'm not going anywhere; this is my home, my family is here."

Good Neighbor Award

Devon Tucker was nominated for the first "Good Neighbor Award" for his many years of tireless work to make Russett a better and safer place to live. He has lived in Russett for twenty-plus years with his wife, two daughters, and cat, McFly.

Last year, he played a significant role in spearheading a grass roots campaign to clean up Route 198. This campaign resulted in meetings with the County Executive, county leaders, and hotel owners to address community concerns.

In addition to maintaining a beautiful, viable, and liveable community, Devon shared that he would love a robust revitalization of the 198 corridor and to see the natural treasure in our backyard, the Oxbow Lake Nature Preserve, vigorously promoted as a Maryland attraction.

When asked about his community activism, he replied, "I believe that the community deserves the best, like fighting for essential things—access to the best education, a safe environment, and quality of life." His activism began



BRENDA ZEIGLER-RILEY

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33



(Above): Fred Tutman, Patuxent Riverkeeper, on a paddle on the Patuxent. (Opposite): Barbara Sollner-Webb, enjoying the Patuxent watershed after the recent snowfall at Rocky Gorge Reservoir, which WSSC has kindly kept open for recreation this winter.

Help Return the Patuxent River Commission to Protecting this River

BY FRED TUTMAN AND BARBARA SOLLNER-WEBB

You may have seen recent articles in the *Washington Post*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *Laurel Leader* about the Patuxent River Commission—this is an update and call to action.

The Patuxent River Commission (PRC) is Maryland's only governmental river commission, created in the 1980s as a safety valve for concerns about the decline of the Patuxent River. The creation of the PRC and the Patuxent Watershed Act that sparked it were the culminations of years of lawsuits, activism, and governmental studies seeking solutions to the steady decline of the state's longest and deepest intrastate river. Fred served on this Commission for the last 23 years, Barbara for the last 19 years; only recently departed Senator Bernie Fowler had a longer PRC tenure.

For many years, the PRC was impressively effective in helping preserve and enhance the Patuxent River. One example of the PRC's numerous environmental successes that was near Laurel was to bring attention to massive ongoing sediment releases into the Patuxent River from improperly constructed and untended sediment ponds during major re-grading to move Rt. 29 east of the old Giant shopping center in Burtonsville. Following this attention, state inspectors insisted the site's sediment control be brought up to code, a sediment-laden inlet partly remediated, and training for State Highway Administration contractors was revamped. In contrast, earlier efforts by individuals and civic associations did not have enough clout to bring any corrective action. The

PRC has also been known for creating the much-used "Patuxent Water Trail" website and initiating a recurring Patuxent Environmental Summit, as well as for numerous stream clean-ups and tree-planting sessions all arranged by Fred through his role as the Patuxent Riverkeeper. It should be noted that throughout these years of being effective for the river, the PRC functioned quite independently of government pressure.

Problems on the Commission began almost four years ago, when the Secretary of Planning, who is a member of the Commission by charter but had never previously participated in our meetings, announced that we lacked legal authority to discuss private development plans that could affect water quality and were under consideration by a local government. He handed us an internal legal memo to support his edict.

Most of the Commissioners were stunned. Not only does our enabling legislation specifically direct that we "review and comment on plans...related to the Patuxent River and its watershed" but the Commission has, from time to time, done precisely that. Let's be clear: the PRC is an advisory commission with no regulatory authority, no budget allocation, and no full-time staff. In effect, the only thing we can do about watershed issues is to discuss matters and issue comments. To be suddenly notified by a political appointee that we lack that discretion, indeed never had those powers, was stunning and more than a little insulting. The Hogan administration, through the Department

of Planning's Secretary, appeared to be trying to use a falsified legal opinion to coerce us into not discussing things in the watershed that really matter, environmentally.

Fearing that the PRC would lose its effectiveness if it can discuss river problems only in a very general way but without acknowledging improper real estate growth, we gave the Secretary's legal opinion to the Maryland Attorney General. His office quickly issued a fresh opinion saying exactly opposite of the Secretary: that there is no restriction in our deliberations about river-related policy, reinforcing the directive of our enabling statute.

Most of us on the Commission felt the matter was settled, and we continued working on the effort we had been engaged in: bringing attention to an inequitable and, hence, illegal planned transfer—to a private developer—of a tract parkland purchased with Land Water Conservation Fund money. Despite the Department of Planning's continuing to discourage this PRC effort, our attention ended up with the environmentally desirable outcome of the county not doing this questionable land transfer and protecting additional sensitive land abutting the river from development by acquiring it as parkland.

Another proposal we recently looked at, despite the Department of Planning's discouragement, was high-density development in the headwaters of the Middle Patuxent branch of the Patuxent River, a project where high-quality land that had been in the Agricultural Preserve (MALPF) was questionably "swapped" for essentially un-buildable land. That the PRC might extend its analysis to address an underappreciated 2017 law on removing land from under Agricultural Preservation (HB155) seemed especially discouraged by Department of Planning representatives.

Indeed, it appears that the Secretary of the Department of Planning still believes our Commission is his to control (which he acknowledged in media accounts). He evidently waited for the appointment cycles of five of the most independent voices on the Commission to reach the stage when, in previous appointment cycles, we would have been semi-automatically renewed, but instead instructed that we not be reappointed. The legitimate appointments procedure requires that they ask advice from the serving Commissioners for new individuals to fill any vacancies and then obtain "the advice and consent of

the [Maryland State] Senate" before the Governor can officially appoint any new Commissioner to those positions. But so far as we know, that has not happened this round. Furthermore, while the PRC's enabling legislation mandates that our positions are to be chosen to "represent...interests within the [Patuxent] watershed," one of the new replacements neither lives nor works within the Patuxent watershed and gave no indication of any involvement with the Patuxent in his introductory speech.

This latest is a *coup d'état* over an independent Commission, reflecting the Hogan administration not only thumbing its nose at the rule of law but also seeking to silence and censure dedicated voices for the river who are guilty of no more than fulfilling the oath they took as Commissioners: to protect the river!

It surely is relevant that projects the PRC has questioned tend to be the sort that cannot withstand much scrutiny, including ones requiring vacating conservation easements on parkland, changing zoning on sensitive lands, and waiving various local standards, rules, and laws. These are projects on which the proponents seek as little commentary as possible because if brought to light, they risk not being approved. We know this makes the applicants angry and makes their governmental allies angry, too. So, it surely is much easier to get rid of pesky tree-huggers.

We do not know if the Governor has any profit participation or direct business connection to these projects because, as most Maryland citizens know by now, our Governor is not transparent about such things.

So, what are we to make of a wholesale replacement of several of the most dedicated, outspoken, and longest-serving Commissioners with people who have not been lawfully appointed? Removing the Patuxent Riverkeeper, who has a long and admirable history of working to preserve and enhance the Patuxent River, is striking, especially in light of the Secretary of the Department of Planning saying he wants "new perspectives" for the Commission. Might there be any desire to retire the Riverkeeper's perspective of preserving and enhancing the Patuxent River?

The response from the Maryland General Assembly has been speedy and resolute. Senate legislation drafted by Senator Paul Pinsky and cross-filed in the House of Delegates by Mary Lehman

seeks to update the charter of the PRC to fulfill more of its original purpose as a watchdog. It hopefully could return the PRC to being the best forum in the State for raising and exploring solutions to the problems of a formerly healthy river that now consistently gets a "D-" in water quality. This legislation is called the Bernie Fowler Water Protection Act of 2022. Watch for it and encourage your state legislators to vote for it.

Furthermore, it would be swell if interested citizens request amending this proposed legislation to take the PRC out from under the Department of Planning. That location seems to us to have inherent conflicts of interest with the PRC's intended mission, underscored by their making the PRC liaison the very person designated as the state's "Intergovernmental Review

of Federal Programs SPOC (single point of contact)," a position described as "for the coordination and review" of the use of federal grant money, including the Land Water Conservation Fund mentioned above. In contrast, in earlier years when the PRC's acting liaison was from the Department of Natural Resources—which truly cares about the environment—disagreements such as those described above never occurred.

As the late Bernie Fowler would say, "Never, never, never, never, never give up!"

==

Fred Tutman is the Patuxent Riverkeeper and Barbara Sollner-Webb is President of the West Laurel Civic Association.





A display from the Edgar Allan Poe House interactive exhibit at the Laurel Museum last Fall.

Edgar Allan Poe and Laurel



BY FAYE GREEN

In November, I read an article in the *Baltimore Sun* about the Laurel Museum hosting a traveling display on the death of Edgar Allan Poe. The article about the exhibit made this assumption: “Though he may have passed through Laurel while traveling, the author of such famous works as *The Raven* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*, doesn’t really have a connection to the city.” I might suggest otherwise.

With all the mystery and questions surrounding Poe, I would add one more mystery. Is there a connection to Laurel through the large Poe family in residence here?

Laurel’s most famous Poe, Gertrude L. Poe, Lady Editor of the *Laurel Leader*, was certainly another Poe with words to write. For decades she was acclaimed for her writing. In her memoir, Gertrude Poe wrote

about Edgar Allan Poe with the conclusion that the blood line has not been proven. But traditions in our Poe family accept the relationship. Our family’s extensive cousin list is dotted with Edgar Allans. Other family albums have a common ancestor referenced. Is our ancestor, David Poe, Edgar Allan’s ancestor David Poe? Who knows? Why can’t it be proven?

I like to believe that we have Edgar Allan Poe on our family tree. He had no children. Maybe on a limb? Far out in thin air.

There is often talk of exhuming Poe’s body in Baltimore to solve some of the mystery concerning his death. Then there would be DNA. Oh my, maybe we Laurel Poes aren’t related to the famous author. Oh my.

New Novel by Former Laurel Resident

BY FAYE GREEN

My focus on Ireland’s history continues with the publication of my sixth book, *The Irish Woman*. It is the dynamic story of life after the famine. Annie Doyle leaves Portumna Workhouse in County Galway to be a nanny in an English manor in Northern Ireland. She hopes to find her surviving children who are scattered across Ireland and the globe. *The Irish Woman* is the culmination of my inspiration gleaned by studying Ireland and traveling there to visit museums and memorials to the difficult famine years.

The Irish Woman is a stand-alone novel that readers can appreciate even if they have not read its prequel, *The Hungry Piper*. *The Hungry Piper* readers asked what did Annie Doyle do after the famine and what happened to her sons, Patrick and Sean? What was the fate of her daughter, Fiona? The answers are revealed on the pages of *The Irish Woman*

Here’s an excerpt from *The Irish Woman*:

Annie spoke, “Phillip our last unpleasantness is not our problem. Prejudice is the problem. The English attitude against Irish. I have married an Englishman. You have sired an Irish boy who, along with his daughter, have become my adopted family. That is unimaginably intertwined. Disrespect is just below the surface with you. We will not live each day in fear of your retribution because we are Irish in our own homeland.”

Phillip Harker, Lord of Belle Grand Manor, knew who he was. He knew the smallness of his own character. He understood the traditions of his titled status made no allowances. It was hard to have the Irish woman lay it out and make him accountable.

==

Faye Green is retired from the Prince George’s County School System and the Department of Defense at Ft. Meade. She is a native of Laurel, Maryland and now lives in Milford, Delaware with her husband—not far from her children, her grandchildren, the Chesapeake Bay, and Atlantic beaches—the people and places she loves. Her books are available from SaltWatermedia.com, Amazon.com, and the author, at greenvine@verizon.com.



COMMUNITY



PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. VINCENT PALLOTTI HIGH SCHOOL

Pallotti's Centennial Celebration



BY RACHEL PODORSKI OROZCO

Over the past 100 years, St. Vincent Pallotti High School has made history time and time again. We've expanded in both enrollment and in physical size; created a competitive and championship winning athletic program; witnessed the curation of college-level curricula; expanded an ever-improving technology program; created an Arts Academy; served our community on both local and international levels; and graduated thousands of successful, well-rounded individuals.

On Saturday, November 13, 2021, community members gathered in the Sr. Karen Gymnasium of St. Vincent Pallotti High School to celebrate a monumental milestone: 100 years of service to our students and local community.

The event, entitled Pallotti's Centennial Celebration, brought together alumni, parents of alumni, current parents, current students, local business owners, and politicians for one purpose: to celebrate the impact of the school has on its graduates and community.

The lavish event was held in the gymnasium, which had been transformed into a gorgeous venue complete with pipe and drape, and a temporary carpet. Soft jazz music played by Pallotti Arts Academy musicians filled the room while guests gathered and mingled over cocktails and passed hors d'oeuvres. Guests were invited to sit down for a plated dinner, compliments of Maryland Country Caterers, a local business owned by Jen Jacobs Endres (Class of '87). The delicious meal featured filet mignon and potato crusted mahi-mahi.

MC'd by current Pallotti Math Department Chair, Mr. Jeremy Rheam ('94), the program featured a brief oral history of Pallotti over the past 100 years. Attendees were treated to special guest speakers including the Provincial of the Pallottine Missionary Sisters, Sr. Mary Grace ('64), Emilie Hunt Shipman ('68), Principal Emeritus Steve Edmonds, Christoph Neisess ('16), Ainae Nielsen ('17), and Laursen

Lancaster ('18). Guest speakers told stories from their time at Pallotti, their current successes, and how the school has impacted their current lives. A talented performing artist on the rise, and recent contestant on NBC's *The Voice*, Ainae Nielsen, left the audience in awe after performing "Rise Up," along with members of Pallotti's instrumental music program.

The Centennial Celebration was a marvelous milestone for the school. It was an honor and privilege to be selected to be the Master of Ceremonies for this event. Having been at Pallotti for over a quarter of its history as both a student and a teacher shows what a spectacular place this is and how special it is for everyone. Pallotti is not just a "place"; it is family and once you enter the doors of the school either as a student or member of the staff, faculty, or administration, you automatically become a member of our family.

—Mr. Jeremy Rheam ('94), Math Dept. Chair, New Teacher Mentor

The evening was concluded when President/Principal Jeff Palumbo shared the much-anticipated plans for the Second Century project that includes building new indoor courts and practice fields, a new sports medicine suite and weight room, a black box theatre, a new engineering and robotics lab, offices, classrooms, and conference rooms. The project is set to break ground in early 2022.

As we reflect on our past, we look forward to our next 100 years, and we're thankful to every member of our community for joining us into our Second Century.



Rachel Podorski Orozco, lifelong member of the Pallotti community, serves as the school's Assistant Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations.



CAMILLE PENDLEY

The Legacy of Wilma Foster (1925–2021)



BY VIRGINIA MAE GEIS

Laurel lost a legend on October 18, 2021, when beloved, longtime resident Wilma Ferree Foster passed away at the age of 96. Anyone who knew Wilma will remember her as a sweet, kind, fun-loving, family-oriented woman who was a living example of her Christian faith, teaching others to serve and to do it cheerfully. She could be seen playing the guitar at church, with her extended family surrounding her, singing. Or she would be helping out in the church kitchen during a women's or youth event. On one occasion, she used a walker to move around after suffering a fractured pelvis, and yet she still had that ever-present twinkle in her eyes. However, there was another fascinating side to Wilma that not everyone knew about, and which evokes a different image than the grandmotherly woman at church: she was a WWII "Rosie the Riveter."

The tenth of 11 children born to a sharecropper family in rural Virginia, Wilma Ferree was a 16-year-old schoolgirl when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941—a day that changed the lives of millions of people. As America went to war, Wilma

did what many other young girls had to do: take on work to help her family survive. When work became slow for her father, she dropped out of school and did whatever was necessary to help both her family and the war effort, including helping to distribute ration books for materials that were in short supply. Wilma's family was fortunate to be living on a farm because they had their own supply of milk, butter, cheese, and whatever they grew in the garden. However, the war crept closer to the Ferree family when men started to be drafted, and two of Wilma's brothers left to join the U.S. Navy. Wilma moved to Hagerstown, MD, to stay with an older brother while she worked at Fairchild Aircraft and sent money back to her family in Virginia. (According to family members, at first the main reason Wilma was sending money was to prevent the sale of her horse; however, the situation eventually became so dire that the family had to resort to that anyway.)

Upon taking the job at Fairchild, Wilma joined millions of American women who took on industrial positions to fill the void left by men going off to

war. Decades later, the term "Rosie the Riveter" was coined to characterize these women, and, indeed, Wilma was specifically trained to be both a "riveter" and a "bucker." As a riveter, she learned to take a snake drill and drill holes on the inside trailing edge of the wings of PT-19 trainer planes; as a bucker, she learned to firmly hold a block of wood, called the bucking block, to stabilize the metal where the riveter was drilling.

In an interview, Wilma described her time working at the plant:

"In the plant, safety rules were closely followed. We had safety shoes, long-sleeved blouses, slacks, and a snood hair covering. My co-worker was to hold the bucking block firmly and still, to back up the metal where I would be drilling. The wire extension on my snake drill was about two feet long. One day I was drilling, and my co-worker was busy talking and not really paying attention. She let the block slide, and the extension reeled back on me. It hit my head and tore out some of my hair...We were both questioned by plant security because of the torn hole in the metal, because they needed to rule out sabotage."

The war forced women into situations they had never imagined. But war does that, and Wilma went willingly. She did not question why things happened; instead, she cheerfully stepped up to do whatever was needed. After the war, Wilma voluntarily gave up her job at Fairchild, returned to rural Virginia, and resumed life as it had been before—except that she was not able to return to school because the family needed to spend the little money available on other needs. Being family-oriented, Wilma accepted this hardship and focused on the fact that her brothers had returned safely from the war, and she and the family were grateful for that blessing. Wilma confessed years later that the war had changed her in many ways: she became more aware of what she had; she learned to live modestly, thinking of and helping other people in need; and her faith strengthened.

According to a family member, Wilma met Abraham Foster when his mother was Wilma's Sunday School teacher at a little country church in Hayfield, VA. At first, Abe had his eye on Wilma's sister, Evelyn. However, when he learned that

Wilma played guitar, he decided that he liked her better and set out to woo her. Wilma and Abe married in 1946 and settled in Laurel, where Abe had already established himself. Together they raised two daughters, Anne Marie and Marjie, who survive her, along with four grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. Her husband, Abe, died in 1993.

Wilma was a homemaker, quilter, and Sunday School teacher. For more than 40 years, she and her daughters toured area churches to sing gospel music, with Wilma on guitar. Later in life, Wilma was a founding member of Laurel's chapter of the American Rosie the Riveter Association, established in 2013. Over the years she made herself available to speak at schools and to other groups who

wanted to hear her personal account of World War II, and she expressed pride in her country and the part she had played in supporting it. On one occasion, Wilma told her story at a local school for at-risk youth, ending the talk by having the students make paper airplanes.

Wilma loved airplanes her entire life, and she was always looking up at the sky. She loved watching the Blue Angels perform. Her adventuresome spirit led her to China at the age of 75 to visit her granddaughter, who was teaching there. For her 80th birthday, her daughters treated her to a ride in a hot air balloon over the Shenandoah Valley, another area she loved. She also loved quilting, sewing, cooking, and baking, and was a constant figure at her church, First United Methodist Church of Laurel,

no matter what the occasion (potluck supper, holiday service, bazaar, women's event, youth event, homeless shelter, funeral lunch, or choir performance). On Sunday mornings, Wilma and daughter Anne Marie Miller were the first ones in the church kitchen to start the coffee so it would be ready for the fellowship gathering after the first service.

Wilma Ferree Foster was many things to many people: a daughter, sister, aunt, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, faithful Christian woman, loyal friend, and a true model of American patriotism. Her smile and sweet, light-hearted nature were likely formed, at least in part, as a result of her selfless role as a "riveter" and a "bucker" during the war, and she was proud of that. Wilma did not think of herself as

a legend but felt that she was just one of many young girls whose lives were forever impacted by World War II. Her spirit, faith, and selflessness drove her back then and also throughout the rest of her 96-plus years in this world. Without a doubt, Wilma let her light shine everywhere, and everyone who knew her would agree that she had enriched their lives in some way.



Virginia May Geis is a native of Laurel and has known the Foster/Miller family her entire life through First United Methodist Church of Laurel. She is a graduate of Laurel High School, class of 1975. After a few decades away, she has been a Laurel resident again, since 2018.

Wilma Was a Treasure

By Kevin Leonard

In 2013 I became aware that there was a Laurel chapter of an organization I had never heard of: the American Rosie the Riveter Association. I contacted Anne Marie Miller, who was president of the chapter, and whose mother, Wilma Foster, was an actual Rosie the Riveter. Wilma graciously invited me to her home and sat for an entire afternoon for an interview, showing me her mementos from World War II with great pride.

It began a collaboration that lasted years. I called on Wilma and Anne Marie many times for information about stories I was writing for the *Laurel Leader* from World War II. They were always gracious and accommodating. But I saw firsthand the effect Wilma had on people with her story a year later.

I had been helping teachers Carrie Holmes and Dale Brennan at Laurel High School with a new History Club. I asked Wilma if she would speak to the students about her experiences, and she readily agreed. The high school History Club invited the student body to attend Wilma's after-school presentation in Laurel High's awesome state-of-the-art theater. There were over a hundred students in attendance, in addition to the History Club members, as well as a sizable contingent of teachers who wanted to hear her story. It was amazing to see how



Wilma and Anne Marie held the students' rapt attention. At the end, Wilma conducted a Q&A session, answering quite a few questions from the students—and from the teachers, as well.

Afterwards, I will never forget watching both students and teachers surround Wilma to shake hands and snap selfies with her—with quite a few hugs, as well—and being so impressed with this vibrant woman who affected so many people with her story. I was proud to call her a friend.

The Laurel History Boys pose with members of the Laurel, Maryland chapter of the American Rosie the Riveter Association during a 2016 presentation. (Left to right): Richard Friend, Rena Van Buren, Kevin Leonard, Lorraine Miller, Wilma Foster, and Pete Lewnes.

A Conversation With...

Dani Duniho



BY KEVIN LEONARD



Former Laurel Mayor Dani Duniho passed away on November 21, 2021. (See her obituary on page 34.) In December 2015, The Laurel History Boys hosted a historical roundtable discussion for the public with all of Laurel's living mayors: Bob Dipietro, Joe Robison, Mike Leszcz, and Craig Moe. Duniho answered the same questions put to the mayors at the roundtable in a prior telephone interview from Arizona.

When did you move to Laurel, and did you attend any schools in Laurel?

I came to Laurel in 1964 and met my husband at NSA.

Mayor of Laurel is technically a part-time job. What was your full-time job while you were mayor?

I had stopped working full-time to stay home with my kids, so mayor was my only job then.

Before your first campaign, what made you want to be mayor?

I did not want to be mayor. I jumped in from the City Council because I didn't want the other person to ruin things. I thought there was a need.

What part of being mayor did you hate?

I can't say that I hated anything. Being a woman caused problems sometimes. There was a man who wanted the mayor to do something, so I tried to tell him, and he said, "I don't want to talk to you. I want to talk to the mayor." And he was really rude and said some dirty things to me. So, I said, "Well, you'll have to find another mayor. Goodbye."

What is the most outrageous favor or request that someone approached you with?

I got a call from an older woman whose sister had been in the Army and passed away. Her other sister had been buried somewhere in Laurel, but she didn't know where. She wanted help to bury the sisters together. She gave me the wrong information so before I could do anything she sent what was left of her sister in a box to my office. My staff wouldn't come in my office when they found out what was in the box. The military finally took care of it. I did send flowers.

What was the biggest crisis or emergency you faced while in office and how did you handle it?

The great repaving of Main Street occurred, taking a very long time. Having the chance to tell the major firms to get their underground work done before the final street paving was to be made, I thought we were beautifully safe for a while. That lasted about a month until the WSSC announced that they suddenly needed to tear up the new corner at C Street running down to our then-City of Laurel's building to do some work underground. The urge to do damage to the WSSC was strong in my heart.

During your tenure as mayor, what was the biggest change you saw in the town?

Mr. Weiss was still here when I was on the Council and then the Clerk-Treasurer's office became a single position.

What is the one thing you are most proud of from your time as mayor?

The effort from me and others who knew that Laurel needed more available housing, especially for seniors. This was a project that went through my four years, had been working for others before me, and kept on. Others who followed me kept on in many ways also, some of them still working on that and I'm sure there have been good things completed.

If you could have one do-over, what would it be?

I would have gotten paid more. All of us wanted that.

At what point as mayor did you say to yourself, "What was I thinking?"

My first day. Being in the City Council was a whole lot easier than being mayor.

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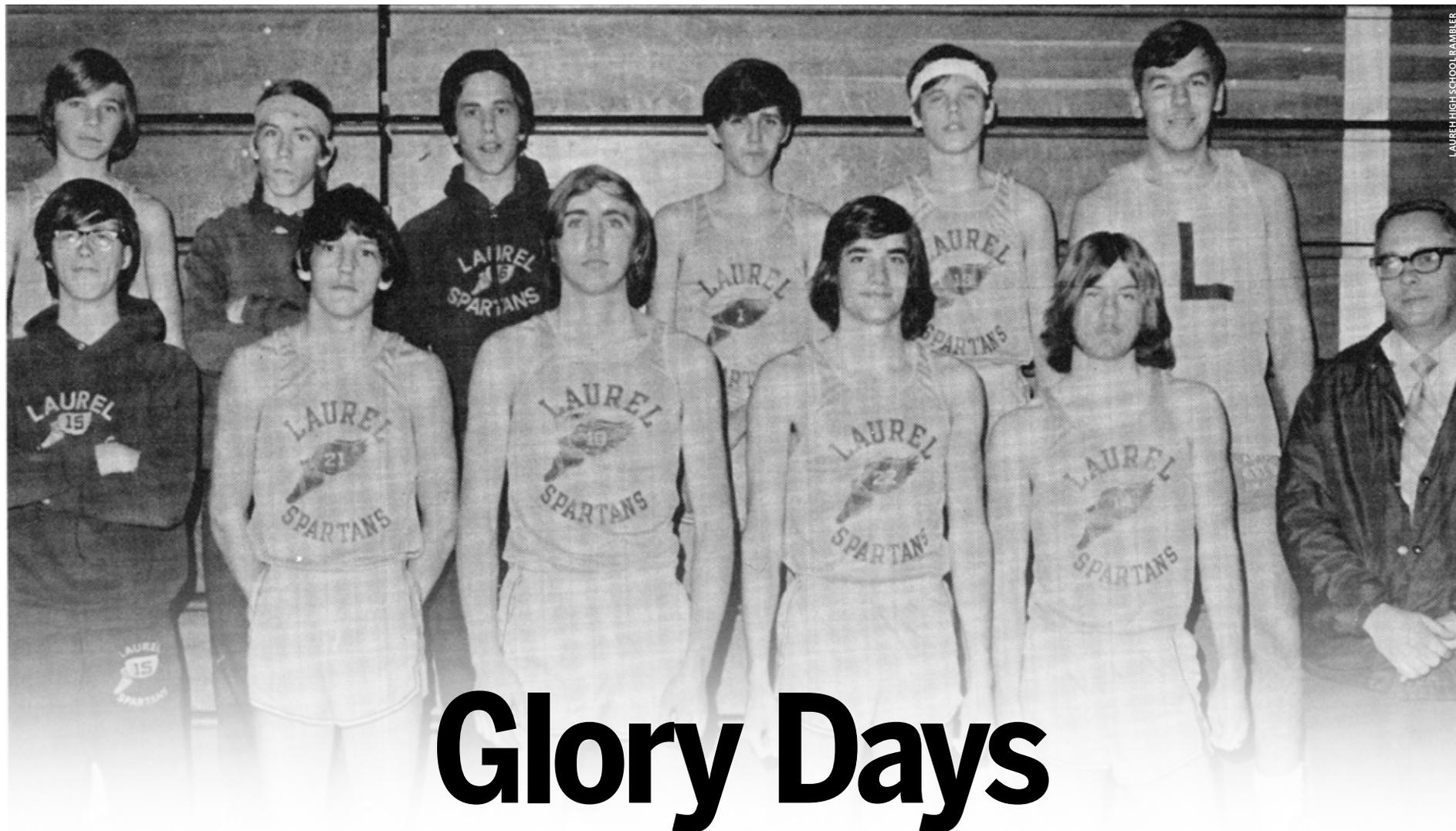
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LAUREL HIGH SCHOOL RAMBLER

Glory Days



BY JIM CLASH

Flash back five decades to the spring of 1973, at the end-of-season Maryland State Track Meet. I'm a senior at Laurel High School, about to graduate, and, along with classmate Steve Garrison, am co-captain of the track team. In front of me in lane four on the quarter-mile tartan oval is none other than Steve, waiting patiently for the baton I'm juggling in my hand as third leg of the 440-yard relay. After I pass the stick to him, at a full sprint, he will blister down the final 110-yard straightaway. His finish will help determine which of eight elite high schools get medals, and which don't.

Better not drop the baton, Jim, or pass outside of the zone—it's immediate disqualification. In other words, don't bonk. Focus on Steve, his outstretched hand, and a clean pass. Just like we had practiced dozens of times, the pass went like clockwork. All I could do at that point, severely out of breath, was watch Steve's back fade into the distance as he sprinted toward the finish

line within a maze of seven other runners. When he hit the tape, I couldn't tell where he had placed. But I saw his arms go up.

I was always a fast runner. In elementary school at St. Mary's of the Mills in Laurel, we never had official gym competition, just recess on the playground. I found I could easily outrun my fellow classmates there, during lunch pickup games. On the Laurel Boys and Girls Club pee-wee football teams, I was also among the quickest. Later, at Laurel Junior High, when we competed in the 220-yard dash on a crude grass track in physical education class, I was the only kid in the school to break 30 seconds.

The summer before I entered high school, coach Ron Ladue was looking for incoming sophomores to try out for LHS's junior varsity football team. I wasn't big, but I was fast. Maybe Ladue could use me as a wide receiver or a defensive back. Many of my teammates from the 130-pound Boy's Club squad were signing up: Steve Hilley, Russ Cepko, Ricky Simmons. But, back then, as was the rage, several students, including me, sported long hair. A requisite to join Ladue's team was to get a haircut. No haircut, no football. Oh well, I thought. I could always run track.

In 1972, as a junior, I tried out for the track team,

coached by Ben Williams, and did okay, filling in on the relays and occasionally placing in individual sprint events. The big guns at the time were Dale Bateman, Chris Benjamin, and Bryan Perkins. They were like royalty. Bateman had run 1:54 in the half-mile, Benjamin 50 seconds in the quarter mile, and Perkins 10 seconds in the 100-yard dash.

Come senior year, I had grown in size, strength, and stamina. Exhausting practices over the many months had done their job. During winter track that season, LHS did very well. Steve won the State 50-yard dash. I was named LHS Most Outstanding Winter Athlete. Expectations were high for our track finale in the spring. Indeed, our 440-yard-relay team, consisting of Mark Stone, Bryan Perkins, myself, and Steve, in that order, won the District meet in 43.5 seconds, a then-school record, qualifying us for State.

Much later, when I moved to New York as a journalist for *Forbes*, I had the opportunity to further my interest in track, interviewing two of my Olympic heroes, Tommie Smith and John Carlos. The sprinters, after placing first and third in the 200 meters, respectively, at Mexico City, shot black-gloved fists

Above: The Laurel High School Winter Track Team in 1973. (Front row, l-r): Brian Shipley, John Stevens, Mark Stone, Steve Garrison, Jim Clash, Coach Williams. (Back row): Brian Thorsen, David Harrington, Jim Pearson, Russell Burton, Mark Carkhuff, and Roy Kottal.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 32](#)



The Laurel Volunteer Fire Department moves their aerial ladder truck into position as they fight flames in the hospital wing at the Maryland House of Correction in Jessup, where inmates went on a 12-hour rampage in June 1972.

RON KLINE/LAUREL NEWS LEADER

“You’re In Charge Now”

LVFD and LVRS Help Quell 1972 Prison Riot



BY KEVIN LEONARD

The summer of 1972 was a particularly bad time for Maryland prisons. In a span of 72 hours during July, three prisons in the state experienced major riots by inmates, with hostages being taken in the last two. The first riot was at the medium-security Maryland House of Correction at Jessup, followed by riots at the maximum-security Maryland Penitentiary in Baltimore and the Prince George’s County Jail in Upper Marlboro.

Inmate uprisings were on the rise then, following the bloodiest prison riot in U.S. history at the Attica Correctional Facility in New York in September 1971. The most common complaints from rioting inmates across the country concerned overcrowding and inadequate medical treatment, meals, and rehabilitation opportunities, among other issues. Ten months later, as the *Baltimore Sun* put it, “The tragedy

at Attica is still fresh in the nation’s psyche.”

At Jessup, Warden Ralph L. Williams had been complaining for months about budget cuts that left the prison woefully understaffed and lacking in maintenance. Williams, the first Black warden in the state of Maryland, was a proponent of alternative methods of rehabilitation, which was in line with the views of Maryland’s then-Corrections Commissioner, Edwin Goodlander. In an essay by Rollin J. Watson, published by Essex Community College in 1975, titled *Letters from Jessup: Notes on a Prison College Program*, Williams is described as “a deeply committed official who has not allowed security consciousness—which, as warden he must maintain—to obfuscate his vision of a better correctional system.”

His vision—and the prison’s budget constraints—were severely tested on July 15, 1972, just days after he

ordered a shakedown of the entire prison compound. Along with an assortment of homemade weapons, drugs, and other banned material, the search turned up 674 plastic and glass containers, 102 of which contained combustible materials to make Molotov cocktails. He alerted state officials of the potential for trouble, but no help—budgetary or otherwise—was offered.

The riot was touched off when about 20 inmates attempted to escape but were wounded by a guard’s shotgun, according to prison officials. Later, when order was restored, inmates claimed that only one tried to escape and that “the guard violated unwritten prison codes by shooting at the inmate before he had cleared the first of two fences that separate the recreation yard from the outside,” Rep. Parren Mitchell of Baltimore told the *Washington Post*. Mitchell and Governor Marvin Mandel had brokered a peace agreement with the inmates.

Whichever account was true, the inmates reacted to the shooting by rampaging through the prison, setting fires and destroying property. The office that contained prisoners' records was destroyed in the fire, which prompted a prison official to comment to the *New York Times*, "Somebody's pretty smart." The vandalism also destroyed the electronically controlled gates to the cell blocks and the telephone system, which cut all communication with outside the prison.

Instead of the 125 guards that was considered the minimum amount to maintain control, Jessup only had 35 guards on duty that night because of budget cuts. When the riot began, most of the guards grabbed all the weapons and headed outside, leaving behind keys to the whole facility.

At 8:26 pm, the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department received a call for aid at the prison. Upon arriving, the LVFD and the Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad were presented with "the worst" situation they had ever encountered, as Fire Chief Joe Robison and Rescue Squad Chief James Alexander told the *News Leader*.

It was up to the Rescue Squad to open the prison yard gates for the firefighting and rescue equipment, since prison officials had left their keys inside with the inmates.

"The prisoners had complete control of the building. They were throwing objects out of windows, yelling and making loud noises. There was much confusion and the situation appeared to be out of control for quite a while," Robison told the *News Leader*.

In 2018, I conducted an oral history with Robison. He sat with me for hours talking about his life in Laurel and he provided some startling details about the night of the prison riot that were not in the newspapers.

Both the LVFD and the Rescue Squad had every piece of equipment in their arsenal present at the riot. It was all hands on deck for both. In the midst of directing his firefighters; coordinating with Chief Alexander and the State Police; and dodging firebombs, broken glass, and other debris thrown by the rampaging inmates at the first responders as they attempted to extinguish the fires, Robison was approached by Warden Williams.

"You're in charge now," Williams said to Robison.

"What?" said a confused Robison. "In charge of what?"

"The prison," replied Williams. "What do you want to do?"

Robison didn't answer. He was kind of busy. As the riot—and the fire—raged on, every fire company and police department from the surrounding area responded. Robison told me he never saw so many police cars and first responder trucks in one place. And he had to coordinate it all.

"Firemen were hampered in fighting the fires by inmates who hurled stones and other objects at them through the broken prison windows," according to the *Washington Post*.

While this was going on, "We then assisted one of the guards with a self-contained mask so he could reach doors locked in order to get other guards and prison officials out," Chief Alexander told the *News Leader*. "The LVRS mission that night was not one of emergency care but rescue. Our first duty was to help contain the area and prevent the prisoners from escaping."

By 12:30 am, all the fires were considered under control, allowing State Police to enter and slowly restore order inside the prison, cell by cell.

But outside, in the recreation yard, about 200 inmates refused to go back to their cells until their complaints were heard. State Police were preparing to smash through the double gates to the recreation yard with armored vehicles and force the inmates back inside with a contingent of 90 armed officers and police dogs.

But, "only minutes before the assault was to begin, Mandel, rushing from a meeting on the Eastern Shore, radioed from his helicopter to wait for his arrival," according to the *Washington Post*. When Mandel climbed out of his helicopter at the prison, he told newsmen, "We're not going to have a repeat of what happened in New York," referring to Attica.

At about 3:40 am, Mandel and Mitchell talked to the inmates through the fence. Mandel gave the prisoners ten minutes to select 12 representatives to meet with him and Mitchell and discuss their grievances. All other inmates had to go back to their cells. Otherwise, the State Police would drive them back inside with force.

The prisoners agreed and their representatives met with Mandel, Mitchell, and Warden Williams. By 5:30 am, the last of the inmates had been searched and returned to their cells. Order was restored.

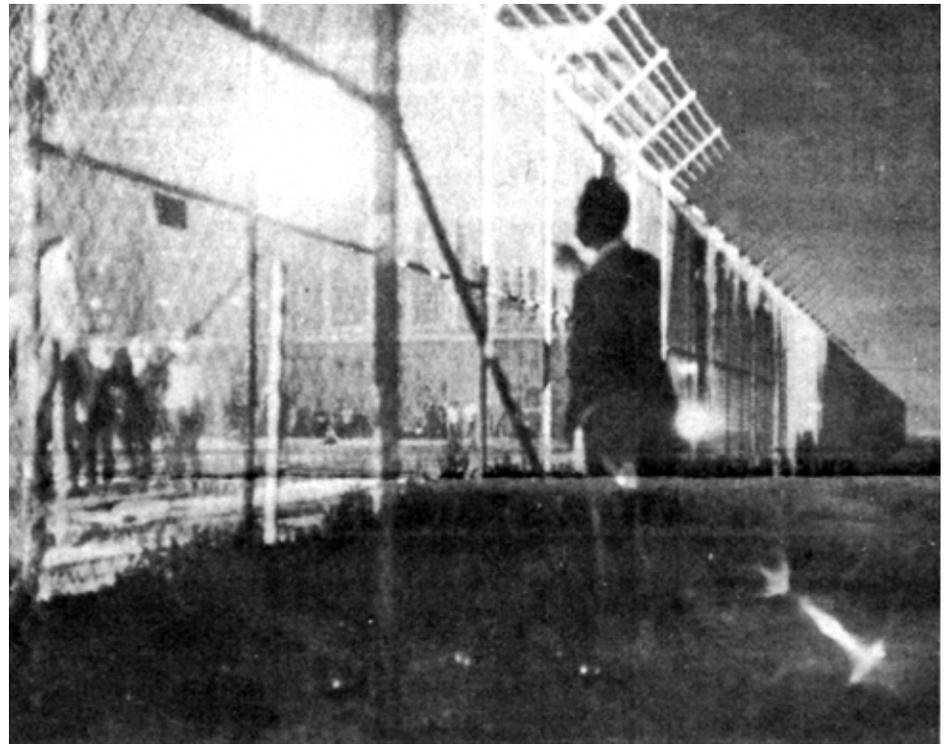
Damage to the facility was estimated at over \$1 million. Four inmates and three guards were injured, but there were no fatalities.

The order, however, didn't last. In August 1979, 30 inmates escaped from Jessup by cutting through a steel bar, a mesh screen, and three fences. Eventually, all the escapees were caught and returned, but there was fallout. One month later, Corrections Commissioner Goodlander fired Warden Williams and his Deputy Warden, John Byrne, along with three other prison superintendents across the state. Goodlander claimed the firings were necessary because of "inadequate leadership," according to the *Washington Post*.

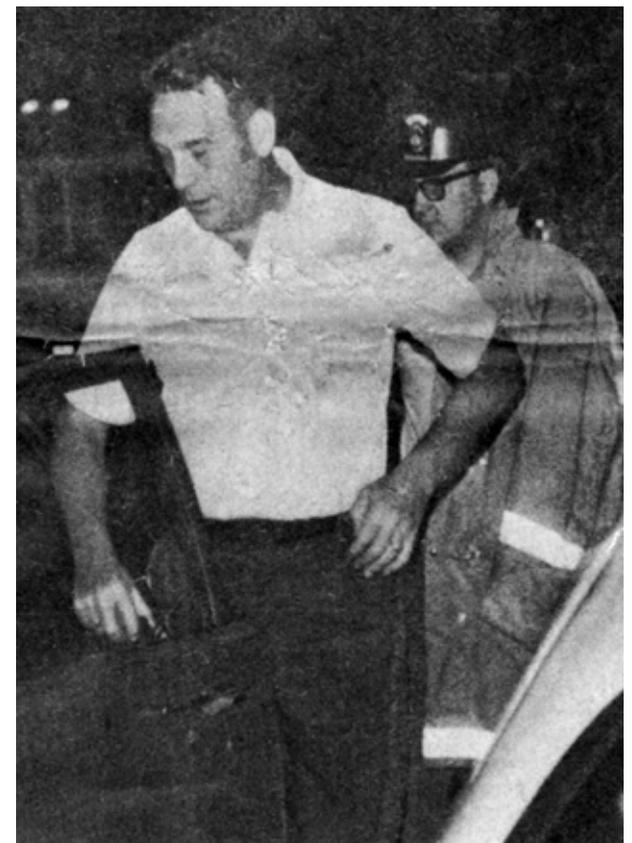
Byrne disputed the firings, telling the *Post*, "Goodlander told me that the escapes had nothing to do with the firings, but I told him he was taxing my intelligence. Of course that's what it was."

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Kevin Leonard is a founding member of the Laurel History Boys and a two-time winner of the Maryland Delaware District of Columbia Press Association Journalism Award.



Rep. Parren J. Mitchell (D-MD) from Baltimore pleads unsuccessfully with Maryland House of Correction prisoners to return to their cells. The inmates had requested to talk to Mitchell but he was unable to convince them to end their disturbance. Governor Marvin Mandel arrived later and the inmates agreed to return to their cells after he offered to discuss their grievances with a committee of inmate representatives. RON KLINE/LAUREL NEWS LEADER



Prince George's County Police Chief Roland B. Sweitzer arrives at the Maryland House of Correction to assist in quelling the disturbance. Behind him is Bob Blyton of the Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad. RON KLINE/LAUREL NEWS LEADER



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY SLYE

An Afternoon With the Woolworth Queens

Longtime coworkers remain in touch



BY RICHARD FRIEND

Mary Slye was there almost from the beginning, and she was right there at the end. The F.W. Woolworth Company became an instant favorite among locals when it opened at Laurel Shopping Center in November 1956, and Slye began working there in 1957. Forty years later, when the venerable five-and-dime went out of business, she was the manager who closed and locked the doors for the very last time.

Mary Hoffman joined the Woolworth's staff in 1967, nearly a decade after Slye. And in 1976, Lucille Harris began working alongside them. Now nearly a quarter century after their store closed, the ladies remain in touch; and they look forward to getting together for lunch every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. This year, my fellow Laurel History Boys and I were honored to join them.

Their memories are still as fresh as one of those countless delicious grilled cheese or tuna salad sandwiches Miss Lucy used to serve up at the lunch counter, and it's instantly apparent that they each still hold a reverence for this special store. Among the mementos they brought along to share with us were photos that span the decades of their employment, classic sales advertisements, and a small trophy that Slye presented in 1997 to the dedicated group of ladies who gathered each morning at the lunch counter, bearing the fitting title, "Woolworth Queens."

That lunch counter is what many of us remember and miss most; and sitting across the table from Lucille Harris today at Laurel's Olive Garden, it's almost like stepping back in time.

Harris had actually been working at another Laurel Shopping Center store—Kresge—before transferring to

Woolworth. She recalls how seamlessly the transition occurred when Kresge closed in 1976. "It closed on a Saturday, and that Monday I started at Woolworth's. Never missed a day of work." Hoffman chimed in, "We went down to get her!" Incidentally, during its 20-year run together, Laurel was the only shopping center in the country that had both a Woolworth *and* Kresge.

Slye notes that there was never any sense of competition between the stores, and remembers the commitment to customer service that most businesses from that era shared—something that today's big box stores simply lack. It's also a testament to the longevity of their careers at Woolworth. When discussing how employees were often transferred to other stores after three to four years, Slye had a simple explanation for why she, Hoffman, and Harris remained at Laurel Shopping Center for so long: "Because we were good!"



Mary Hoffman, Mary Slye, and Lucille Harris worked together at the Laurel Shopping Center store until it closed in 1997, and remain friends to this day. PHOTO: KEVIN LEONARD



Lucille Harris, now 89, fondly recalls her time as manager of food services. The beloved “Miss Lucy” is still recognized by former customers of the popular Woolworth’s lunch counter.

While Harris was a fixture behind the lunch counter for years, Hoffman recalls her time working in practically every other section of the store with fondness—including the pet section, which routinely had parakeets, hamsters, fish, and more. “I never had any trouble with it,” she said. “Except when they occasionally got loose.”

It wasn’t all fun and games, though. Shoplifting became a problem in later years, and Hoffman recounts a particularly harrowing experience when she was accosted while transporting cash to the nearby bank. “I was walking past Peoples Drug when a guy came up and said, “I want that bag.” I said, “What bag? I don’t think so!” She fought the would-be robber off and went into Peoples, where another employee had just witnessed the event. The stunned employee asked, “You know he had a gun, don’t you?” Hoffman replied, “No, but I know he wasn’t getting my money, either.”

Hoffman and Slye were working in the store in 1972 when Alabama governor George Wallace was shot after a presidential campaign speech just a few yards away in the parking lot, and recalled a rush of reporters seeking to use Woolworth’s phones to call in the story.

The ladies remember a comraderie at Laurel Shopping Center that extended beyond just their Woolworth’s colleagues. Staff from nearby stores such as Shirley’s dress shop would frequently stop in for lunch, likely because there was a kinship, forged by a work ethic shared by their generation—a committed group who took inventory by hand with a calculator, without the aid of today’s automated technology.

When asked if there is anything even remotely comparable to the Woolworth’s experience in today’s retail world, the answer was a resounding “no.” And that just makes us miss the five-and-dime all the more.



Richard Friend is a founding member of The Laurel History Boys, and creator of the popular “Lost Laurel” website and book.



Laurel Shopping Center’s Woolworth store during at the time of its 1956 grand opening (left) and after a 1979 remodeling (above) to correlate with the opening of Laurel Centre Mall.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARY SLYE



The Woolworth Queens display one of their namesake trophies in 1997.



RICHARD FRIEND

The Rise and Fall of The Laurel Patriot

A new Laurel newspaper launched twenty years ago—but couldn't last



BY DIANE MEZZANOTTE

As *Voices of Laurel* goes to press on its fifth issue, the need for its existence is clear. Local Laurel news is rarely covered in the *Washington Post* or the *Baltimore Sun*. The *Laurel Gazette* ceased operations several years ago. The *Fort Meade Soundoff!* stopped publishing in 2020. The social media-based “hyper news” experiment called Patch did not meet expectations and fizzled out. The final blow came with the announcement earlier this year that the *Laurel Leader* would transition to an online-only outlet, with no Laurel-based staff and publishing very little Laurel-centric news.

Thus, the time is right for “a new kind of newspaper,” as the first issue of *Voices* declared in the lead story of its first issue—one that tells the stories of Laurel from the perspective of, and in the voices of, its own

residents. As I read that mission statement, it held a ring of familiarity to me. Twenty years ago, in the summer of 2002, I was on the staff of a newspaper that had the same goal of becoming a true voice of the Laurel community: the *Laurel Patriot*.

A Community Paper Born from Patriotism

Launched on July 4th, 2002, the *Patriot* was the brainchild and passion project of Glen Audet, a lifelong Laurel resident who had noticed the slow-but-sure decline of local stories in the content of local media outlets. For years, Glen had envisioned the need for a true “hometown paper”—one that wasn’t owned or controlled by a large corporation and had no political bias or agenda, but which existed solely to serve its community. Glen’s ideas over the years suddenly

became a specific vision with a sense of urgency after Sept 11, 2001. Having lost a cousin who was a flight attendant on American Airlines Flight 11, Glen felt an even stronger need to serve the Laurel area by creating an outlet to tell the good-news stories of the city, publicize and help to organize local events, and help to re-build a true sense of community.

Although he had been involved in some successful business start-ups, Glen had no experience in starting a newspaper. As he shared his vision with others, several people suggested that he talk to John Giannetti, a Maryland-born lawyer who, at the time, was serving in the Maryland House of Delegates for District 13B and who had already launched a few start-up publications. John, too, had recognized the need for a second newspaper in Laurel—one that was community-focused

rather than profit-driven. The two met, discovered that their visions were closely aligned, and agreed to venture out to start a non-profit newspaper that published biweekly and was filled with content written by Laurel residents. They knew that they would need a few more people to make their vision a reality, and that the staff could not be paid at first; but where to find volunteers with journalistic experience?

Glen had a neighbor, Barb Glozik, who was a writer and news anchor for the weekly *Laurel News* program, aired by the city's public access television station. He approached Barb with a pitch to join the *Patriot* team, and she readily accepted. Barb, a longtime Defense Department employee, in turn approached a woman from work who taught journalism classes and with whom she had collaborated on some video newswriting projects: Diane Mezzanotte, the author of this article. I was thrilled to be asked to join a newspaper staff, because although the writing I did for my DoD job was of a journalistic nature, it wasn't quite the same as writing for a newspaper, which had been a goal for many years.

From Pancakes to Fireworks

For the next two months, the foursome met periodically for breakfast at the Laurel IHOP, planning the first few issues over short stacks of pancakes and sides of bacon and hash browns. Coming up with story ideas was not difficult—the four already had many contacts at area clubs, churches, and schools, and both John and Glen had been reaching out to various community leaders to inform them of their plans to start a new paper. Many people had expressed excitement over having some competition for the *Leader*, which they thought charged too much for ads and was not providing adequate coverage of their groups' events.

Over time, a blueprint was created: there would be sports stories, restaurant reviews, and profiles of local businesses and notable Laurelites with spotlights on their achievements. There would always be a University of Maryland-focused story, and other Maryland-based colleges would be added over time. To flesh out the first few issues, some general-interest stories on health, entertainment, and Maryland-wide news were planned, as well as a crossword puzzle and some comic strips that could be reprinted from a syndicated service for a small fee.

Tasks were divvied up: John and Glen would focus on obtaining advertisers and financial backers; Diane and Barb would write most of the stories and build a list of regular sources from area organizations. As for distribution, the plan was to provide the paper for free at stores and businesses around town but also offer mailed subscriptions for a nominal fee of \$20 to cover postage. The success of the new paper would hinge on obtaining enough advertisers to cover printing costs and to eventually hire a managing editor.

The group decided that the perfect time to launch the *Patriot* would be on the most patriotic day of the year: July Fourth. And, since Laurel was famous for its all-day celebration and fireworks, what better place to distribute it than along the banks of Laurel Lakes during the annual Independence Day festival? They chose deadlines accordingly and set aside the back page

to list the schedule of events for the festival, which fell on the 6th that year, since it always occurs on a Saturday.

A few days before the 4th, the first issue rolled off the press and the small staff met outside Glen's house to toast the occasion with a glass of champagne. And then, on July 6th, the *Patriot* staff set up a tent at the Laurel Fourth festival to hand out copies of the paper and sell subscriptions. A free drawing was held for some patriotic-themed Beanie Babies, which were in vogue at the time. And, in a very uncharacteristic move for this self-conscious writer, I dressed up as Betsy Ross to help draw people to the tent. (As the day wore on and people drank their preferred spirits and got happy, that costume elicited some interesting comments, which are best not repeated and which ensured a swift end to my dabbling in cosplay.)

First Issue Welcomed by Community

All day, against the backdrop of live music, hot dog-eating competitions, three-legged races, and the smell of dozens of food vendors, the *Patriot* staff watched as person after person took a copy of the paper and then sat down and read it. Several people came back to pick up a second copy for a friend. Some expressed gratitude at having a competing media presence in Laurel; some used the opportunity to take John aside to discuss issues they wanted the state legislature to address; a few paid for subscriptions on the spot. All in all, the launch was a positive experience, and the staff was encouraged by the public's response.

In the introductory editorial of that first issue, Glen shared a vision for a paper that would "print the stories and images of our community that normally wouldn't get the press time that they deserve." Glen also stressed that the paper would be printed on a full-size broadsheet, rather than in tabloid form, to achieve more of a traditional feel—the size that you fold into quarters to read in sections while on the subway or taking a lunch break at work. For context, the *Laurel Leader* had moved from a traditional broadsheet to a tabloid format, at about the same time that it was



The inaugural issue of The Laurel Patriot newspaper was published on July 4, 2002. Planned to be a bi-weekly publication, only two issues were ever ultimately printed.

purchased by a media conglomerate, foretelling a move from its traditional format and focus.

John's introductory statement promised that the paper would provide a community point-of-reference and would never be run for profit. He plugged the newspaper's "Community Calendar" as a way to boost participation in local activities. Both men asserted

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LAUREL HISTORY BOYS COLLECTION



The Laurel All-Stars circa 1948

Only the Ball Was White!

Black Sandlot Baseball in Laurel (Part 1)



BY CHARLES H. CLYBURN

According to the book, *Sandlot—The Soul of the Game*, by William A. Aleshire, Laurel was described as a “beautiful little town on the Washington branch of the B & O railroad 12 miles from Baltimore and 18 miles from Washington, D.C. The delightful scenery, however, and the purity of water, have done much towards influencing many business and professional men of Washington, D.C. to make their home during the summer months. Washington Boulevard (Route 1) was widened to accommodate the growth and served as one of the main roadway systems through the town.”

And Laurel had a baseball team!

Whether it was called the Laurel White Sox or the Laurel All-Stars or the Laurel Stars, the name is not the important part of this story. The *Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper covered the Laurel White Sox baseball team in 1928. There has been no record of the White Sox playing before or after the 1928 season, lending to the thought the team had disbanded after that season. The formation of the Laurel All-Stars by a group of Black men, followed the next year.

The team’s ball diamond was located in “the Grove” area of Laurel, a section of the city surrounded by a large growth of oak trees. The playing field, in current day dimensions, would be bounded by 7th and 8th

streets, and Gorman and Talbot Avenues. Left field would cut through the present day site of the Stanley Memorial library, whereas 2nd base was on 7th street. A plaque honoring the Laurel baseball team can be found on the property between the present 7-Eleven store and the laundromat at the corner of 7th Street and Gorman Ave. It was installed on the site of home plate where the Laurel team played.

The coach of the All-Stars was George Matthews in 1928, the same year James Norman Carroll began playing for the team at age 15, when the new Laurel All-Stars were formed. Carroll, a pitcher and a first baseman, played until retiring in 1934. Several players were listed on the rosters of both the Laurel White Sox and the Laurel All-Stars. (The team was referred to as the All-Stars and the Stars, alternately, by the *Afro-American*.)

The Laurel baseball team was considered an independent ball club that would book games between local teams, but generally did not participate in league play. The only exception to this rule was during the baseball seasons 1957 to 1959, when the team decided to enter the Tri-State Baseball League organized by William “Doffey” Robert Jones of the Washington Black Sox.

Although the Tri-State League continued, it started to fade from the baseball circuit in 1975. The apparent

withdrawal of the Laurel Stars from league play was due to the construction of Route 198 in 1959, which ran through Laurel and eliminated their home field.

The Laurel Stars moved the team for the 1960 season to Simpsonville, MD.

Their playing field was across from the Harriet Tubman High School, on old Guilford Road. The field was rented until the end of the 1960 season, but house construction began on the property, unknown to the team.

The Stars continued to play their games at the Muirkirk team’s field just outside the Laurel area. By the 1961 season, players either retired or joined other teams.

Players were motivated and graded by coaches/managers in the art of the game.

More on sandlot baseball in next edition of *Voices of Laurel*. Stay tuned.

George Powell and Violetta Sharp-Jones contributed to this article.



Charles Clyburn, a resident of Laurel for 20 years, is a storyteller of African American folktales and a television and voice over actor.

HISTORY

Pillars

The People's Court



BY C. PHILIP NICHOLS

Long before Judge Wapner and his bailiff, Rusty, long before Judge Judy, there was a People's Court in Maryland's largest jurisdictions. I was a part of it.

Judge Joseph Wapner was America's first "TV Judge." He was a former Los Angeles Municipal and Superior Court judge. The show initially ran for 12 years. He was the force behind an arbitration style of settling small claims and became the forerunner of many Small Claims Courts in America. I actually met Judge Wapner at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada. He told me that as a Superior Court judge he tried very serious murder cases and many went unnoticed in the Los Angeles newspapers. On the other hand, you try a \$250 claim on *People's Court* and literally thousands of watchers will write to tell you how you got it wrong. He told me that the show answered all the letters for him, thankfully. He died at age 97 in Los Angeles.

Judge Judy Seindlin presided in the Family Court in Manhattan, New York prior to the People's Court. Judge Judy's *People's Court* ran 25 seasons and was the highest Nielsen rated TV court series. While I never met Judge Judy, I did meet the Chief Judge of the Manhattan Family Court. She said with Judge Judy, what you see is what you get.

The People's Court of Prince George's County

My interview to be a Justice of the Peace and Committing Magistrate was with the then-Chief Clerk, John Catts. John chewed tobacco and spit it in a cup (not unusual at our courthouse back then) during my interview. Fortunately, I was able to focus on anything and everything but John chewing tobacco during my interview. It was an unsettled time in my life as I had just graduated from college as the Vietnam War raged. I was hired and started in June as I recollect and left for the service the following February. My boss was Bernie Sandford, who could not have been any nicer or better boss. I remember that during exam time the police would avoid arresting anyone if they could so I could study. The Justices of the Peace served as Committing Magistrates and set bail and issued summons and arrest warrants around the clock. In Laurel, the late Hazel Kidwell and Eddie Ricks served in this capacity.

The court sat primarily in Hyattsville and in Upper Marlboro but would travel periodically to some of the larger cities in the county such as Laurel, Greenbelt, Bowie, and District Heights. Sometimes the court sat in churches and other public buildings. Going to court in a church was an interesting concept. Eventually, the People's Court became part of the District Court of Maryland. Both the People's Court and now our District Court serve as court of first impression where

most cases start in our state. The District Court is entirely funded by the state and served to professionalize the system in Maryland where most citizens look for justice. The current Chief Judge of the District Court is John Morrissey of Prince Georges County.

Our Judges:

Judge William H. McGrath

In his obituary, a Maryland State Trooper was quoted as saying if you testified in front of Judge McGrath, you were "Ready for God Almighty on Judgment Day!" Judge McGrath served as the Chief Judge and presided over all the cases brought south of Central Avenue. He was a Lt. Col. in the Army Air Corps during World War II and had a warm spot for veterans in trouble.

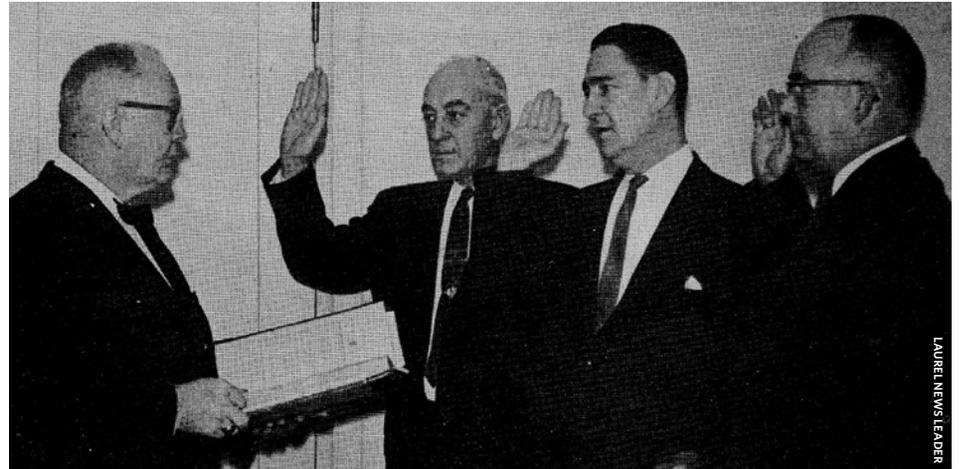
Judge George O'Hare

He presided over all the cases in the county north of Central Ave. His courtroom was in the County Service Building in Hyattsville. When I was growing up, Channel 5 used to feature Traffic Court, I think on Saturday afternoons. It was teenage favorite. When I got my driver's license, I had "the talk" with my father. He insisted that I understand the awesome responsibility it was to hold a Maryland driver's license. He went into some detail about how awful it would be if I got stopped by the police and the trip to court in front of Judge O'Hare would be even less pleasant and there was nothing he could do to intervene. In reality, Judge O'Hare had eight children and could not be any nicer. As for driving, I found out 30 years after passing the driving test, also given at the Hyattsville County Service Building, that the inspector who passed me got the job with my father's recommendation. I thought I was a superior driver for decades.

About the only time Judge O'Hare ever "crossed the line" was the time a train had stopped on the tracks adjacent to the courthouse and continued to blow the whistle disturbing the court. Judge O'Hare sent the sheriff out to tell the engineer to stop. He did not. The engineer was arrested for contempt of court. Another engineer was dispatched to Hyattsville in a cab from Union Station to move the train.

Traffic School

The Traffic School was an integral part of our traffic court. It was started by then Prince George's County Police Sgt. (and later Chief of Police) John Rhoads. An educational part of any sentence so it does not happen again is important. Sgt. Rhoads used to visit Traffic



W. Waverly Webb, (left) Clerk of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, administers the oath to new People's Court Judges William H. McGrath, George J. O'Hare, and substitute judge R. Bowie Claggett.

Court to see the "students" Judge McGrath sent to him. One poor man was a witness in a traffic case and things went adrift when Judge McGrath held him in contempt of court then ordered him to complete traffic school in order to be released from jail. As was his custom, Sgt. Rhoads would go around the class and ask how they came to be in traffic school. Some had too many points, some an accident, but when John inquired of the man in this case, he responded some "SOB of a judge" sent me here and I cannot get out of jail until I complete traffic school, so please get this thing going!

I actually went to Traffic School. My cousin Michael managed to get into an accident at the Parkway and the Beltway. At the time, Boyd Hamilton was a retired police officer and then a bailiff. He and the late Chief of the Prince George's County Police, Roland Sweitzer, were partners for a time and often referred to as "Ham & Cheese." As was the custom, Boyd put in a good word and my cousin Michael was sent to Traffic School. The week prior to the start of his class, he broke his ankle and could no longer drive because of the cast. If I wanted to keep driving the family car, I was enlisted to drive Michael back and forth to Forestville to attend class.

(While Roland was Police Chief, he lived in West Laurel with a number of other county police officers. He would always drive the speed limit from Laurel to the County Police Headquarters in Forestville. It was not unusual to see several police cars trailing behind him doing 55 mph on the beltway since no one would dare pass the Chief going the speed limit.)

The Prosecutors

One of colleagues, the Hon. Judge Richard H. Sothoron, began his career in the law as an Assistant States Attorney. While appearing in front of Judge McGrath, the late Senator Edward Conroy appeared on behalf of a client who was a veteran. The Senator said words to the effect, "Your Honor the State of Maryland has arrested a veteran." Judge McGrath responded, "is that true?" Dick conferred with the police officer and responded yes. Judge McGrath told him to apologize to the defendant. Dick said, "Sir, I thought I was here

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 33](#)

First Cars, Fast Cars... And Oh, the Memories



BY JIM SMART



MIKE VOY/UNSPASH

If it's one thing Laurel kids remember most, it was the fast cool cars we grew up with a lifetime ago. Though we probably didn't think of it that way at the time, we came of age in the 1960s when we had Detroit's attention and it had ours. Detroit wanted to know what we wanted in a new automobile. Detroit also wanted to know what our parents wanted.

Between post-war parents and young impressible boomers coming of age in the 1960s, Motown faced a target-rich environment where sales were red hot—with stylish full-sized luxury cars for the folks and fast high-performance cars for the younger set. It was an exciting time to be alive.

Car dealers papered up the showroom windows in anticipation of next year's models. We couldn't wait to hit the showrooms for a look—hoping it meant a new car for the family. Sometimes, it meant sneaking into the dealer storage lot to see what was back there. For my struggling family, the best we could hope for was a used car. It was the best my father could do on a government salary with a stay-at-home mom.

My dad was a Chrysler loyalist. Aside from a lone

'62 Pontiac Catalina hardtop he bought in an odd moment in 1966, he always bought Plymouths and Dodges throughout my childhood. It was a mild April evening in 1964 when my dad visited Fred Frederick Chrysler-Plymouth on Washington Boulevard, not far from Laurel's historic Main Street. He came home to Steward Manor Apartments with a '61 Plymouth Valiant sedan—a base sticker priced, no-nonsense “Grandpa car” with a slant six and three on the floor void of carpeting—clad instead with that rubber school bus flooring and a block-off plate where the optional AM radio would have gone. If we wanted music, we had better learn to sing or don a transistor radio.

Our Valiant was a no-frills simple automobile bent on economy and durability. It had that tasteless continental treatment on the trunk lid and cat-eye taillights that kept a lookout for tailgaters. I really loved that car. In fact, I loved it so much I just had to have another one when I came of driving age in 1972—my mother's hairdresser's '60 Valiant—and later in one of those mid-life crisis moments in my forties. I just had to have another one. I managed to locate a pristine low

mileage '61 Valiant sedan on eBay in Minnesota with just 38,000 miles showing. It uglies up my California garage just fine and is a sweet reminder of my Laurel youth so long ago.

I hop in the Valiant and take in the aroma of a dusty old cloth and vinyl interior. I sit in the back seat anticipating my father reaching around and belting me for pestering my sisters. I always sat directly behind my father where he couldn't reach me in a fit of road rage. It meant him having to pull over and haul me out of the back seat for a spanking in the public eye. Too inconvenient and virtually never happened.

In April of 1964 Ford introduced the sporty Falcon-based Mustang fun car. We were parked in front of our Philco black and white console on a Thursday night when wild horses came parading across the screen. At age 8, I had no idea what horses had to do with an automobile. I only knew my third-grade teacher at O.W. Phair Elementary School—Miss Sondra Wight—had one of those new Mustangs. It was a Wimbledon White convertible with a red interior and probably had an anemic six-cylinder engine.

In the summer of 1964, Miss Wight and her sporty little Mustang faded away and it was time to think about summer vacation. It really is the cars I remember most from growing up in the 1960s in Laurel. I remember what people drove when I was a Laurel kid. The Griffins in Apartment 101 had a '63 Belair wagon as did the Pomerantz's in 104. Another family in 103 had a new '63 Falcon Futura. The McGills in 203 had a '64 Dodge Dart. Another neighbor in 203 had a new Ford Fairlane.

These Steward Manor Apartment rides were all vanilla utilitarian transportation compared to some of the more exciting hardware they could have had in those days. Parents in my apartment building were mostly working stiffs and career Army from Fort Meade. They needed reliable transportation to get to Washington and Baltimore. Some commuted to Fort

Meade and Goddard/NASA nearby.

I remember Laurel for some mighty fast cars. You probably remember them too. There were always the legendary fast cars around Laurel—the ones to beat. A lot of them were old Lumpy Rutherford-style jalopies our parents called “old pieces of junk.” There were also the new cars—the GTOs, Chevelle SSs, Mustangs, Fairlanes, 4-4-2s, Camaros, Barracudas, Roadrunners, AMXs, and the like that got our hearts pounding. As young souls, we wanted to get out on the open road and escape the surly bonds of the parents. Anything but another stale episode of *Bonanza* or *Gunsmoke*.

When we were of driving age, Laurel's new car dealers knew how to bate us with exciting cars. When I was working at Fred Frederick in the early 1970s in new car prep, the rush of moving these cars around got me dreaming. I wanted a new 'Cuda so bad I put a

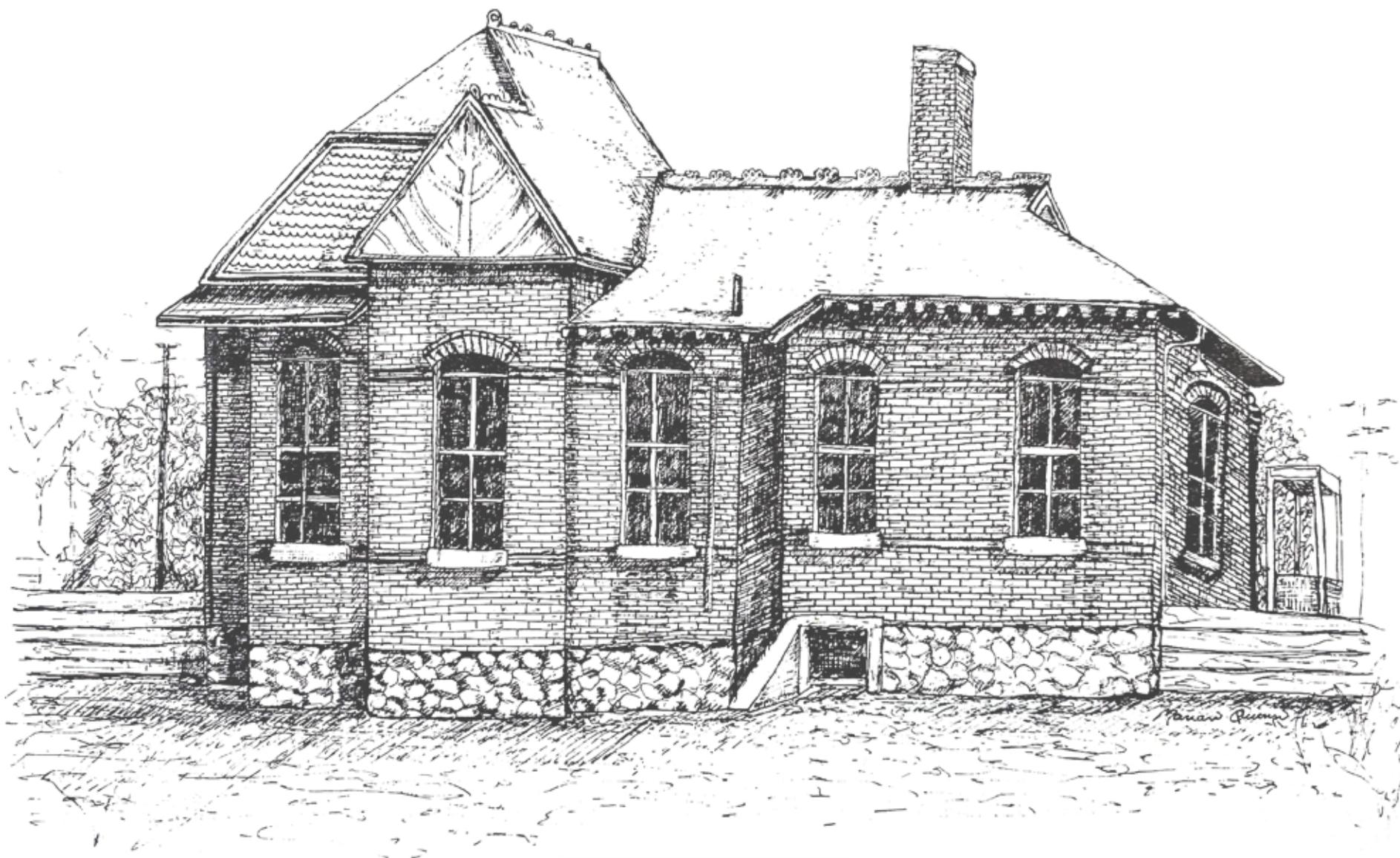
plan together in my head for how to get into one. It was not to be. That dream turned into a used '67 Mustang, which changed the direction of my life completely.

Laurel memories for us are surely about automobiles when you could identify them from any direction based on styling. Today, it is virtually impossible to identify new cars based on styling because they all look like jellybeans with grinchy smiles in search of an identity. Makes you want to find a classic car on eBay and a dream ride you could call your own. To sleep—per chance to dream.

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Jim Smart grew up in the Washington-Baltimore area—primarily in Lanham, Laurel, and Bowie. He lived in Laurel from 1963–65—moving to Belair At Bowie late in 1965.

MARIAN QUINN'S LAUREL



LAUREL TRAIN STATION

Marian Quinn, a local artist and framer for over 50 years, has a large collection of illustrations of historic and cultural sites in Laurel. She is also the owner of Fulton Art & Framing in the Cherry Tree Center at Routes 216 and 29. She is a regular contributor to Voices of Laurel.

Love a Good Historical Mystery?



BY ANGIE LATHAM KOZLOWSKI

I found one right here in Howard County. It surrounds the final resting place of a Union Soldier. Local hikers, geocachers, and Civil War history buffs may be already aware of this Union Soldier's gravesite, which is nestled deep in the woods near Savage, MD. The gravesite is about 150 or so yards off the Wincopin Trails, which are well-marked, Howard County-maintained trails at the confluence of the Middle and Little Patuxent Rivers. It was not until I began researching this gravesite that I learned that there are a number of unmarked church, private, or family gravesites around the county. Interest in and scrutiny surrounding the responsibility for the caretaking of these gravesites, present since the dawn of development of the once vast acres of farmland in the county, has led to the formation of several preservation organizations and community-led efforts over the years to recognize and honor those buried long, long ago.

I was interested in learning more about this gravesite because of its off the beaten path location—it can only be reached by hiking, literally, off the beaten path—and to learn more about the soldier, who is seemingly buried outside a family plot or church cemetery.

My husband and I, curious to see the gravesite firsthand, picked a cool and sunny November afternoon to hike there. A Google search directed us to the Wincopin Trails trailhead off Vollmerhausen Road, where we found parking in a small lot that also had a porta potty. The trails were clean and quiet, except for the din of I-95 that stayed with us until we were well along on the trail.

Upon arriving at the well-managed gravesite, we noticed logs stacked two-high acting as fencing around the perimeter of the grave. The headstone was surrounded by four small, weathered U.S. flags and opposite that was a contemporary Christmas wreath embedded with a string of lights. On a tree next to the site, a covered shadowbox similarly adorned with small, weathered U.S. flags and containing a single-page obituary for the

fallen soldier provides a summary of his life and tragic passing.

The soldier's name is John Francis Wyman. He was born in Syracuse, NY, in 1838. He went by J. Frank Wyman or Frank Wyman. His great grandfather, James Wyman, was a civil servant, working as a town treasurer; a Patriot that served in the Revolutionary War; and a third-generation son of immigrants from England who arrived in Massachusetts in the 1600s. The obituary at the grave mentions a Wyman Family genealogy site, where I found this information in a very detailed Wyman family tree (at Wyman.org). He was one of seven children. Mr. Wyman's father was also named John Francis Wyman. Mr. Wyman, Sr. had left Massachusetts and settled in upstate New York before 1834. It was there he raised his family on the farm he owned.

In August of 1861, Frank Wyman enlisted in the Union Army, where he served in Company F, First Regiment, NY Lincoln Cavalry. He was discharged in June of 1865 as a QMSGT in Richmond, VA, according to a NY.gov civil roster. According to Fold3, an online resource for historical military records owned by Ancestry.com, Company F saw two notable battles. The first was a skirmish in Upperville, Virginia and the other near New Market, Virginia; both took place in 1864.

Following his service, he met and married Hester Anne Morehead, who was born in Fauquier County, VA in 1849. They were married in Washington, D.C. in 1866. In 1868, the couple had a son named William Howard Wyman. By 1870, Mr. Wyman was working as a cabinet maker and living in Washington, D.C. with "Annie and Willie."

Sometime over the next 10 years, according to his gravesite obituary, Mr. Wyman had settled in Maryland and operated a farm on land butting up against the Middle Patuxent River. While I have not been able to confirm he was a landowner or farmer during those years, he did indicate on his 1880 U.S. Census that he was employed as a farmer or perhaps planned to be.

Less than a month after the census, on



The grave of Union Soldier J. Frank Wyman, located off the beaten path on land now owned by the Columbia Association. PHOTO BY ANGIE LATHAM KOZLOWSKI

July 5, 1880, Mr. Wyman was struck by a B & O railroad train at the Annapolis Junction station and was taken to Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C., where he died two days later. The *Washington Evening Star* reported the details of the inquest into the accident, as well as some personal information about Mr. Wyman in the days after it happened. At the inquest, a statement from the sole witness noted that he saw Mr. Wyman step off the platform at Annapolis Junction onto the track as if

he were going to board the Washington train moments before an express train, which, according to a B & O general agent, never stopped at the junction, came down the track where he stood.

It was determined in the official, juried inquiry that Mr. Wyman died from head injuries he received from being struck by the B & O locomotive. The *Evening Star* also reported that Mr. Wyman had been on an excursion to Annapolis the day of the accident and was struck while changing rail cars.

Further, he had been separated from his wife since January and was living in Washington and working as a clerk in the census office at the time of his death. In May, the *Evening Star* had reported that Mr. Wyman was one of 90 people who would be working as enumerators in the city for the 1880 census that was to begin on the first of June.

The results of that census also showed Mr. Wyman resided in the District. He was listed as a boarder living with the Otis Sofield family. Was this a temporary housing arrangement while he worked as an enumerator for the census, or had he been living with someone who owned property in the area of Howard County where he is buried? An atlas of Howard County, compiled in 1878, did not show Wyman as a landowner at that time. This leads me to speculate he may have intended to purchase or work on a farm on what is now the Columbia Association-owned land, but had not yet done so before his passing a month later.

His wife Annie and 12-year-old son William, according to the 1880 census records, were living in Washington, D.C. with her widowed mother, Eliza Morehead.

It is a mystery to me why Mr. Wyman was not buried in Washington, D.C. but was moved from the hospital in D.C. to Maryland for burial in a plot on land that I have been unable to link to him or his family. The site is approximately 3.5 miles from where the Annapolis Junction station stood in 1880, according to the Hays T. Watkins Research Library of the B & O Railroad Museum's Research Department. Their sources note the current commuter platform of the Savage MARC station is very close to where the Annapolis Junction station was located. The photo at right of the station, from circa 1880, shows what the station looked like at the time when Mr. Wyman was struck.

Within a year of Mr. Wyman's death, in June of 1881, a lawsuit was filed in the Court of Common Pleas against the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company in the death of Frank Wyman by the State of Maryland on behalf of Mrs. Wyman and her infant son, William H. Wyman. The lawsuit was heard by the Circuit Court of Howard County in Ellicott City, which sided in favor of the plaintiff

against the Company for \$1,500 on April 14, 1882.

Mrs. Wyman, the former Hester Anne Morehead, is also a descendant of at least one Revolutionary War Patriot, and her family was prominent in Virginia and Kentucky in the early days of the nation. Five years after Mr. Wyman's death, Mrs. Wyman briefly remarried. She later sought an annulment from the D.C. Supreme Court and to have her name restored to Wyman. She continued to reside in D.C. with her son. She was an active member in several patriotic women's organizations, including, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.); Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR); and the Lafayette Chapter No. 10 of the Women's Relief Corps. Mrs. Wyman also worked in the Government Printing Office, where she was reported to have been injured at work in 1914.

Mrs. Wyman's death was also the result of a tragic accident. She was killed by a hit and run driver on June 22, 1927, at age 77. She was walking to a DAR meeting in rainy conditions when she was struck by the car. She and son William are buried in the Glenwood Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Tim Glinka contributed to this story.

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Angie Latham Kozlowski is a U.S. Masters swimmer with the Columbia Masters. When she is not swimming, she is often researching and writing about her family history or historical topics of interest to her, growing her own luffa sponges and blueberries in her backyard garden in Ellicott City, and actively promoting sustainable and Earth-friendly practices.



What's Cookin', Laurel?

A New Exhibit Opens at the Laurel Museum in February



BY ANN BENNETT



Tuna Noodle Casserole. Cheese Fondue. Tomato Aspic. Strawberry Pie.

Sam and Elsie's. Bay 'n' Surf. Pal Jack's. Matthews Bar.

If you remember any of these dishes or places from times past, you won't want to miss the next exhibit opening at the Laurel Museum on February 5–6, 2022.

What's Cookin', Laurel: Recipes, Restaurants, and Community will put food in the spotlight, exploring all the ways that we connect with our past and experience the present through local foodways. We'll look at signature dishes from home cooks (Have your own special recipe? Send it to us!) as well as current restaurants and places that are gone but not forgotten—our list is almost at 200 restaurants from c.1816 to this year!

Laurel residents have gathered around the table in many ways over the years—everything from the Laurel Farmer's Market, to the old Laurel Mall, to Epiphany parties in Old Town, and more. Interested in the early food stores and small grocery chains? Or the role that local farms and farmers played in supplying food to Laurel residents? You'll find the original "farm-to-table" movement in Laurel fascinating!

The exhibit looks at the impact of segregation on the food traditions of the African American community of Laurel and captures the integral relationship between food, faith, and community at St. Mark's Methodist Church. You can also read about food trends and ways that you can help with food insecurity and the green movement in Laurel and beyond. We'll have recipes for you to try, artifacts from closed restaurants to view (including some from *Voices of Laurel's* own Richard Friend), and community cookbooks to look through. You'll have to let me know if you try any of the recipes from those vintage books, but I prefer tomato aspic only as a memory from my grandmother's table!

Why choose food as a topic for an exhibit? Because food is family. Food is culture. Food celebrates our roots and shapes our identity. It is an expression of human art and creativity and has the power to transport us in time and place—with just the aroma coming from the kitchen. Although the idea of food as an exhibit topic was proposed a while ago by a committee member, we thought that after the heavy events of the last two years, food would also be a fun way to reconnect with each other and explore new foodways (check out *Laurel Area Take Out* on Facebook for ways to do just that).

We are planning a lot of fun and new programs to support the exhibit, including cooking demonstrations, food panels, live videos, and a new version of *The Taste of Laurel*. We are also working on a companion cookbook to the exhibit and want your recipes and stories that go with them.

I hope you join us at the Laurel Museum and online in 2022 to explore all the ways that food connects and challenges us. You can reach me by email at director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org or call the museum at (301) 725-7975. I look forward to connecting with fellow foodies and learning more about the culinary history of Laurel, because as Julia Child said, "People who love to eat are always the best people." *Bon appétit!*

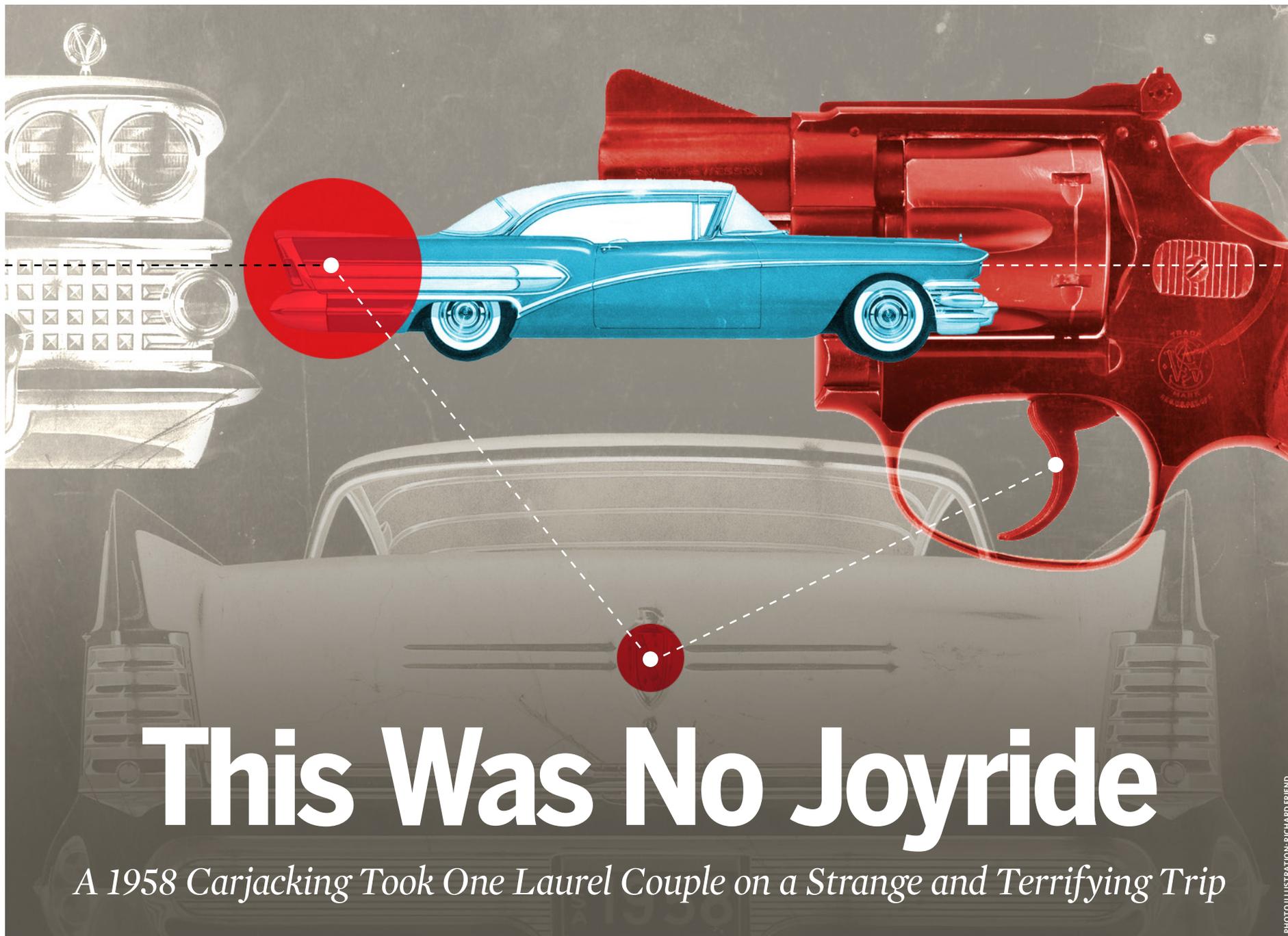


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: RICHARD FRIEND



BY RICHARD FRIEND

Laurel Noir is a series focused on historic crimes and the darker underside of our hometown.

They had just finished watching *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* that Sunday night in August, 1958.

Frank Tuozzo, Jr. and his wife, June, both 36 years old, had no idea they were about to find themselves smack dab in a horrifying plot the likes of which the Master of Suspense himself might have concocted.

The Tuozzos lived on Hance Place, just off Bowie Road. June was the daughter of City Councilman Thomas Murphy, and Frank was the well-liked manager of the Laurel Diner (the current Taste Diner). Just after 10 p.m. that night, they decided to take a short drive before bedtime—perhaps to drop by his parents’ house on Montgomery Street. Noticing that the elder Tuozzos still had visitors, Frank and

June continued along Montgomery Street to Sandy Spring Road. They drove to Willis Hall—a popular country music venue that would see the likes of Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, and George Jones over the next decade—where they made a left onto Contee Road. This being before I-95 was built, what is now Old Sandy Spring Road actually connected with Contee Road almost exactly where the Route 198 overpass is today.

From Contee Road, they took Cherry Lane down to Washington Boulevard. The couple, by this time deep into an enjoyable conversation, decided to make one more loop around town before heading home for the night. Within a few minutes, they were once again cruising along Cherry Lane. June was the first to notice the speeding car coming up behind them. “Look out,”

she said. “Here comes a hot rodder.” Frank pulled over to let the aggressive driver pass, but the car suddenly swerved and stopped, forcing the Tuozzos off the road. The driver exited his car and approached the couple, shouting, “I want to see your driver’s license.”

Frank realized that the man wasn’t a police officer, and quickly rolled the windows up. But before he could put the Buick into reverse, the stranger was at his door with a snubnosed revolver, ordering them out of the car.

The Tuozzos reported that the man seemed nervous and unsure of what exactly he had planned. He first made the couple lie down on the side of the road. Then he changed his mind and ordered Frank to turn off the Buick’s engine—which had still been idling with its lights on—and hand over the keys.

Next, he had Frank and June lie down in the center of the road while he planned his next move. The couple asked him repeatedly what he wanted, but “he never seemed to comprehend” their questions, according to a front page story in the *News Leader* written by editor Gertrude Poe.

After briefly looking into the trunk of the Tuozzos’ car, he closed the lid before opening the trunk of his own vehicle. “Then he ordered me into the trunk of his car,” Frank later explained. “I could hear the lock turn, and I heard him tell June to get in front.” At gunpoint, the man forced Mrs. Tuozzo to keep her head under the dash.

With Frank in the trunk and June ducking low in the front seat, neither were able to know with certainty what route the vehicle was taking, but they could guess. To them, it seemed that he continued down Cherry Lane to Washington Boulevard, where he turned south. He then turned right onto Contee Road. The Tuozzos believed he made this loop twice, possibly crossing over Washington Boulevard the second time and going as far as Bowie Road before returning. During one particularly tense moment, he stopped to let another car pass by—holding the gun to June’s head as he warned her “not to do anything.”

The man, described as White, approximately 25 years old, six feet tall, 195 pounds, and dark haired with

prominent facial features, proceeded to Van Dusen Road, and finally stopped at the Contee gravel pit.

Frank, who had been unable to force open the trunk from the inside with a jack handle, reluctantly gave up on trying, realizing that any damage he did to the lock might make opening the trunk even more difficult. He continued to lie in the pitch dark, cramped space, fearing the worst may be yet to come.

The man then forced Mrs. Tuozzo to remove her clothes, and “although he molested her and talked to her in obscene language about sex, he did not attack her,” according to the *Leader*. After removing his belt, he used it to tie June’s hands to the steering wheel before saying, chillingly, “I’m going to get your husband out of the trunk so he can watch this.”

Mrs. Tuozzo reported that the man seemed to be so nervous throughout the ordeal as to even have difficulty speaking. She watched in fear as he walked toward the rear of the car. Then, just as suddenly, he returned and began to untie her wrists. What he said next—now without any hint of nervousness—shocked her almost as much as the abduction itself. “I’m deranged, and I’m sorry for all I’ve done—and I’m glad I didn’t do anything more. I’ll be all right when I have a cup of coffee.”

He told June to put her clothes back on, and then to walk toward the road and turn right. As she did, she

called out to Frank, still in the trunk, to let him know that she was okay. As Mrs. Tuozzo began walking away from the attacker, she worried that she might hear a gunshot at any moment. But no gunshots were fired.

The man unlocked the trunk and ordered Frank out. He gave Mr. Tuozzo the same instructions he had given his wife—to walk some fifty yards ahead, where he could rejoin her. As he set off, the man got back into his car and drove away, heading south. The Tuozzos ran to the nearest house they could find, nearly a quarter mile away. Now 11:35 p.m., they aroused the owner and phoned the Maryland State Police.

In describing the abductor, June seemed most struck by the man’s change in demeanor after regaining his senses. He’d lost his nervousness, she said, and even “had a pleasant speaking voice.” She added, “At no time did he use poor grammar.”

The Tuozzos’ hour-long nightmare was over, but the unhinged man in the blue Buick never was identified. If there was one positive, it was that he also never returned to terrorize anyone else in Laurel.



Richard Friend is a founding member of The Laurel History Boys, and creator of the popular “Lost Laurel” website and book.



This 1957 aerial photo shows Laurel near the time of the Tuozzos’ abduction. Laurel Shopping Center, which opened in 1956, was only half the size it would eventually become. The Laurel Sanitarium still sat between the shopping center and Cherry Lane. And Old Sandy Spring Road connected to Contee Road at the site where the Route 198 overpass at I-95 is today.



JOHN FLOYD/LAUREL HISTORY BOYS COLLECTION

Laurel's former police station at the end of C Street, the building was originally a Safeway. C Street Flats now occupies the site.

“We had a guy...”

Tales From the Laurel Police Department



BY RICK MCGILL

This continuing series is an uncomplicated string of personal war stories from my time at a small municipal police department between Baltimore and Washington, D.C., told without a lot of extravagant details; just the facts, ma'am. Other cops will appreciate the bare-bones setups of my individual anecdotes. But I do try to explain some of the procedures for the general public who has little understanding of why we do some of the things we do.

The men and women I worked with are the finest you will find in any police agency anywhere. Some have since retired or moved on to other agencies, and some are still there fighting the good fight. Hopefully, this bit of sucking up will make up for any inconsistencies in my memory of the events in which some of these great guys

made an appearance. They will no doubt recognize their own first names and possibly the fictitious names of some of our less-than-law-abiding customers.

So grab yourself a cup of java or crack open a beer and get comfortable. You're in a room full of cops talking shop. And the attitudes, sometimes smart-ass, sometimes despairing, that go with it. In our town, on my shift, this was policing in the last decades of the 20th century.

Our city of Laurel has an excellent fire department and rescue squad. If you want to survive a serious car accident, I highly recommend having it in our town. Like to overload your electrical outlets or leave the iron plugged in while you go on vacation? This is the place to do it. They usually beat us to fire calls and auto

accidents. But not always.

I was a young rookie, probably only days of street experience, when a fire call came out at the Greyhound Bus station at Main Street and Washington Blvd. This was in 1980 so it was before the terminal moved across the street, not that it matters, but the three or four cheap little apartments above it were even older and grimmer. I was the first car on the scene, and I could see smoke and a little flame behind the ticket counter through the window of the small bus terminal, which was closed at the time. It was Sunday afternoon and there were no buses running. Above the terminal were these little apartments with a stairway door at street level. I ran up the stairs from the street and started knocking on the first door to alert the occupants of the

fire downstairs.

What do I know? There might be a fire and I need to tell these people they should consider fleeing for their lives. You walk up to a door and knock.

We had a female officer at that time named PFC Joanie and she had also been dispatched to the fire call. She was a cop's cop, and a good example for us rookies. She was also good friends with my mom and dad, so I know she'd have some good advice for this rookie. I wasn't getting any answer at the door, and I was contemplating moving on to the next one. Just then Joanie came pounding up the stairs and continued running right past me, from door to door banging on each one with her blackjack and kicking all the doors and yelling, "FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! EVERYBODY OUT!"

Oh. *THAT's* how to evacuate a burning building. I filed that away for future reference.

I think we only evacuated one person and the fire turned out to be electrical and was quickly put out. It sounds simple but it was a good lesson in reality. You don't let good manners get in the way when lives could be at stake. And I don't think she ever told mom and dad how dumb, but polite, their son was knocking on doors at the fire.



There are cosmic coincidences that sometimes strain belief. One of our guys once stopped a woman for some minor traffic violation. In Maryland you have thirty days to notify the DMV if you change your address. PFC Burt had recently moved into a new apartment and—figure the odds—recognized the address on the woman's license as his new apartment, right down to the apartment number. He asked her if this was her current address and, apparently, she was afraid she'd get a ticket so she said it was.

Every cop who's heard this story A) can't believe it (but I know Burt and I believe it 100%), and B) would spin the roulette wheel of wise crack responses to find just the right one. But Burt just told her, "That's funny: I've been living there for two months and haven't seen you once."

And everybody always adds on tidbits like, "You could vacuum once in a while..." or "I like light starch and creases in my shirts..." or "We're out of ketchup."



Speaking of lives at stake, we had a guy one time—come to think of it we never did get him, so I guess we didn't actually "have" him—but he called his estranged wife one day while she was working the cash register at Safeway when it was on Bowie Road by the railroad tracks. The couple had been having major problems (obviously since she was "estranged"), but this time he told her on the phone that he could see her right at that moment through the scope of his hunting rifle and through the front window of the Safeway store.

Sgt. Wally (of the missing finger a few episodes back) had our squad fan out across that area of town looking on top of every high point we could find where someone could hide with a rifle and see the Safeway

store. I drew short straw and got to check out the roof of the only high-rise building that fit the profile: Arbitron. Ten stories up, it provided a great vantage point for lots of targets. It would have made for one hellacious SWAT barricade situation if he was up there. The elevator machinery and air conditioning were in a smaller building up on the roof and were pretty hairy for one person to search and clear.

I had worked security at the building when it was under construction, so I had a general idea of the layout up on the roof. So, shotgun in hand (we didn't have patrol carbines then), I proceeded with caution, as they say in Hollywood, up to the roof. The elevator doors opened directly into the mechanical room with all kinds of machinery and hiding places but the only place to see the Safeway store was out on the open exposed roof. One door led out and it was a little tense until I was satisfied he wasn't anywhere on the roof or in the machinery room. Just another dead end.

Sammy Sphincter got a workout that day but we never did find the guy. The wife was pretty jittery, too. The estranged wife. Not mine. Well, maybe mine after I told her the story.



Our SWAT team was excellent. I came on the team in the early 1980s and we thought we were pretty hot shots. At that time the department provided precious little in the way of tactical equipment. This was before Asset Forfeiture laws came into being and the tactical equipment we were able to obtain with money seized in criminal drug cases. Consequently, we had to buy most of our own gear. There were no real guidelines—if you needed it and you were willing to buy it yourself (and if it was black—always a perquisite for any real cool-guy tactical accouterment), go get it.

We had a guy go barricade in his house and he called his ex-girlfriend to get the party started. The usual "I'm-gonna-kill-myself-and-anyone-who-tries-to-stop-me" routine. She calls the police and to skip over all the theme music and exciting lights and sirens, I'll go right to us setting up outside the house and getting ready to make a forced entry. You've seen it in the movies and TV, a line of serious-looking, professional SWAT officers are all set to bring a dangerous situation to a safe, happy ending.

Our negotiators were on the phone with the guy, and he just wasn't going to come out. On and on it goes and the team finally gets the word to go in. At the last minute someone raised a question about the address just to be double-sure. The girlfriend, who was in a different city altogether, swore he was at 920-something Montgomery Street. We had him in our computer from a recent arrest living at 800-something 7th Street. Right about this time he decides to give up and come out. The negotiator tells the team that he's coming out and to get ready to take him down. Other than actually kicking in the door and making entry, having a suspect come out to be arrested is always the most dangerous moment. Until he's on the ground and in handcuffs anything could happen. He could come out the wrong door. He could change his mind and

want to fight. He could come out shooting. Anything.

After a minute or so, Junior comes back on the phone and says to the negotiator, "Man, there's nobody out here. That's not funny. Where are you guys?"

Cut to more theme music and lights and sirens while we haul ass to the right address. Everything else worked out the way it was supposed to. Happy ending and all. Just don't tell anyone we went to the wrong house. That's between you and me.



Okay, one more, just because we're talking about SWAT calls. That last one could have been a page right out of my Hostage/Barricade Phone Technician School. Our team is called ERT for Emergency Response Team, but most departments use different names for their tactical team. On our team, in addition to being a shooter I was the technical geek who was tasked with setting up a special hostage phone system allowing our negotiators to seize a phone line so no one could call in or out and so we could talk to a suspect by phone, or deliver a stand-alone phone if didn't have one, bringing a peaceful end to what could have been another photogenic albeit heart-pounding assault by the ERT team.

Okay, so it's a mixed-emotion job. The team trains and trains to make high-risk entries and deploy all the toys of the trade: ladders, battering rams, stun grenades, and/or tear gas. You get into a mindset of how to do it all safely and successfully. On the other hand, if the negotiator talks the suspect into surrendering almost none of the tactics are put into play. So, while we understand that is the preferred outcome, it's kind of a let-down when we're all psyched up to make a forced entry and the guy gives up. Like when your blind date shakes your hand and tells you she had a nice time and says, "good-night," but you were hoping steal the next base.

But back to the "had a guy." When I originally went through the phone technician course, the instructor was from the county police department, and they had a guy one time (there it is) on a barricade who was stringing their negotiators along all day on the phone. Their negotiators were talking him into coming out and it dragged on for hours, until they heard fire truck sirens on the phone from the suspect's location. They were setup at a safe location nearby, but they didn't hear any sirens outside. The negotiators asked the perimeter team to verify that no fire trucks were responding past the location. The team was like, "What kind of question is that? No, there're no fire trucks here." Uh-oh. It turned out that the suspect had moved and kept his old phone number and was in Washington D.C, nowhere near the location they had surrounded. Oops.

See? It can happen to anybody. Like my good special forces buddy likes to say: "Good Training."



In a small town like ours, small being under 30,000 people, you tend to have the same set of dirtbags to deal

Advertising Heats Up

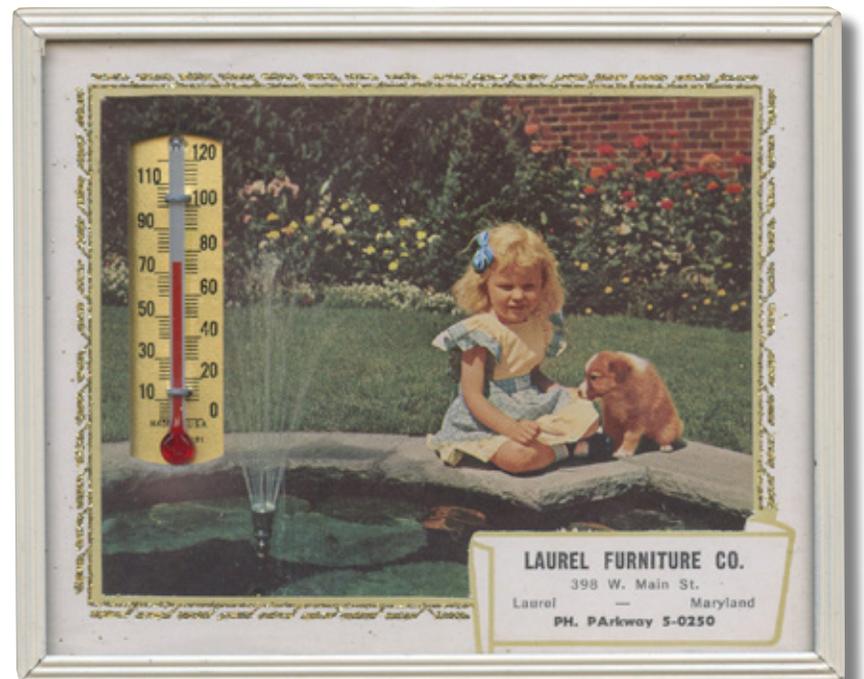
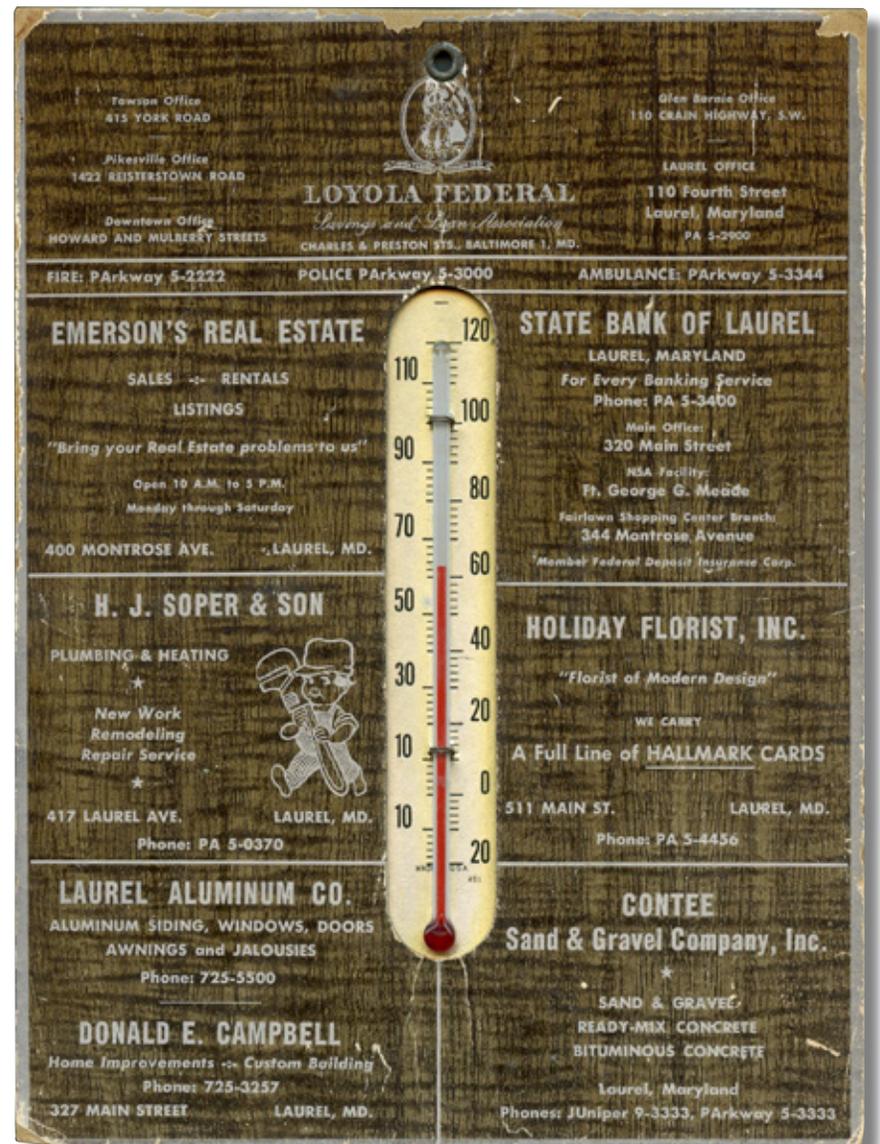


BY PETE LEWNES

With winter settling in, it's always smart to check the temperature before venturing outside. Merchants from yesteryear recognized an opportunity to put their name on something that customers would see and use daily, and advertising thermometers became highly popular giveaway items. Laurel Furniture Company was one of the most prolific, but several other businesses in town offered them as well. Here are a few thermometers from our collection—and they all still work!



Pete Lewnes is a founding member of The Laurel History Boys, and a prolific collector of historical Laurel memorabilia from all eras.



Glory Days

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Tommie Smith and John Carlos strike their iconic pose on the Olympics podium in 1968.

into the air protesting for civil rights. I remember the strange medals-stand pose vividly, while watching the Olympics on television in 1968 as an impressionable 13-year-old.

Both men told me that they had received numerous death threats following Mexico City, were banned from most competitions, and had trouble finding work. The protest had pretty much ruined their lives. But both also said that if they could do it again, they would not hesitate, that they thought the gesture had helped further the cause for Blacks, eventually leading to Barack Obama being elected the first African American President of the United States.

Later, Smith and Carlos were vindicated, of course. A statue of their Olympic pose was erected in 2005 at San Jose State University, their alma mater, and, in 2019, they were inducted into the Olympic & Paralympic Hall of Fame.

Going back to the first part of this story, by the way, did Steve Garrison cross the finish line first at that Maryland State Track Meet anchoring the 440-yard relay? No, but he did finish second, giving us silver. It was a bit disappointing at the time, like kissing your sister. But, 48 years later, I've come to appreciate that silver, while not gold, is pretty damn impressive. I'll take it.

Jim Clash, a longtime writer for Forbes magazine, regularly immerses himself in extreme adventures. He has a BA from the University of Maryland, an MBA from Columbia University, and graduated from Laurel High School in 1973. His books include Forbes to the Limits and The Right Stuff: Interviews with Icons of the 1960s.

Laurel Patriot

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

that the *Patriot* would never engage in any political activities. The fact that this statement was being made by a sitting politician is noteworthy, and perhaps a bit ironic, in the overall story of the paper's demise.

The lead story of the premier issue highlighted the Independence Day celebration and the many Laurel volunteers who plan and run it each year: the fire department, the rescue squad, city government officials, and the Fourth of July Committee. The centerfold contained the Community Calendar, which listed area bingo games, summer concerts, and City Hall meetings and events.

Other stories included:

- The Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad's use of a new piece of equipment (an AED) to save the life of a woman who had collapsed at Patuxent Greens Country Club.
- A spotlight on Laurel resident and standout athlete Obi Oluigbo, who was being courted by the biggest football colleges in the country and who ultimately played for the University of Michigan. Three Terrapins drafted by the NBA also were highlighted in an article.
- Local-focused articles about the Tastee Freez Diner, the retirement of Police Chief Roy Gilmore, and the Laurel Boys and Girls Club's baseball program.
- The text of Laurel High School's valedictory address, delivered by Sarah E. Devillier.
- A story about the famous Wye Oak of Maryland, which had been felled by a storm in June 2002.
- A story about fibromyalgia, which was just beginning to be widely known and diagnosed, told firsthand by Barb Glozik, who was living with the disease.
- A review of Sam and Elsie's restaurant on Route 1.
- "Dom and Mom At the Movies," in which my tween-aged son and I took opposing views on whether "The Scooby Doo Movie" was a worthwhile watch.

Second Issue Woes: A Cautionary Tale

Sadly, the success of the first issue was not repeated in the second. The content was not the problem: it contained similar stories focused on local businesses and people, and the Community Calendar was already starting to grow as people submitted items to publicize. The *Patriot's* demise was perhaps a "perfect storm" of situations that dealt an early deathblow by making a third issue unattainable.

The biggest underlying issue was the lack of advertisers. The business plan depended on obtaining ad revenues quickly, but despite their best efforts

pounding sidewalks around town to sell ad space, Glen and John were unable to score enough ads to fund printing costs. Some businesses had long been advertising in the *Leader* and were not willing to commit to a competing start-up with no track record. More significantly, many business owners were wary of funding a newspaper co-founded by a politician—especially one who had become a somewhat controversial figure in Maryland politics at the time. A few large businesses that had tentatively committed to full-page ads backed out just before the second issue went to press.

One business did commit: the owner of Sam and Elsie's, who was over the moon with the positive review in the first issue and paid for a large ad in the second issue. However, an unfortunate miscommunication resulted in the ad promising a "buy one, get one free" special on their famous crab cakes, rather than the intended "buy one, get the second at half price." The restaurant could not honor the coupons, as they would lose money on the sales, which resulted in unhappy customers and a vow from Sam and Elsie's to never again take out an ad in the *Patriot*.

To add insult to injury, a software glitch occurred in the program that Glen was using to typeset the paper from home. Undetected until after publication, the glitch caused random characters to be inserted throughout the articles and headlines, rendering most of the copy unreadable and giving the false impression that no one had edited the issue prior to publication.

So, almost as quickly as it began, the *Laurel Patriot* folded after just two issues. It wasn't for lack of passion, commitment, or customer interest. Perhaps the staff aimed too high, too fast. Perhaps the idea of publishing customer-driven and reader-written content was ahead of its time. Maybe the layers of local politics at the time were just too much to overcome, despite all assurances that politics would not enter the picture or the business plan.

In any case, the staff of the *Laurel Patriot* can look back, two decades later, and be proud of their vision and their efforts. I will always cherish my copy of the paper and look back on the heady days of our planning sessions with gratitude for the opportunity to be a small part of Laurel publishing history.

Diane Mezzanotte has lived in Laurel since 1987. A graduate of Penn State's School of Journalism, she is happy to return to writing "people stories" after retiring from a 34-year career with the Defense Department.

“We Had a Guy...”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

with your whole career, and their whole life. Kids I used to bust for hooking school and vandalizing the city parks grew into bigger buttholes who got into bar fights and sold drugs and robbed convenience stores. Why can't these kinds of people move somewhere else when they graduate into the “big leagues”?

We had a guy, okay—two guys, twin brothers, Darryl and Daren. You'd think evolution would at least make one of them “normal” and law-abiding, but noooo. They were both troublemakers. And because they were identical twins they were always giving each other's name when we'd stop them to check for warrants. A warrant check means stopping someone on the street and running their name through the computer to see if another agency wanted to have them over for a visit or introduce them to a judge in court for a little chat.

With these two brothers, half the time it wouldn't matter; there were usually open warrants for both of them at any given time. So, when you'd have Daryl in an alley somewhere and Communications came back with a warrant hit, he'd swear he was just kidding around and he was really Daren, or vice-versa. Right.

But they were smart-asses, too: no respect at all so they were just no fun to deal with and they'd fight or resist arrest. I think one of our guys tried to break Daryl's nose one night so we could all tell them apart in the future. Don't get me wrong, he was resisting arrest plain and simple. It might have just been a real quick thought process on our guy's part during the struggle. *Hey, broken nose equals 'identifying mark.'* WHAM! But when they were done at the hospital the nose turned out not to be broken.

Didn't matter. It also turned to be Daren after all.



Not every police report ends with the initial description of the basic events. When there's a probability of additional supplementary reports the typical closing line of the report narrative is, “Investigation to continue.” I hope these anecdotes haven't offended too many readers of this venture from The Laurel History Boys. And hopefully there will be more to come. Thanks for your time.

Investigation to continue...



Rick McGill grew up in Laurel and worked at the Laurel Police Department from 1977 to 2001. He authored two history books: Brass Buttons & Gun Leather, A History of the Laurel Police Department (soon to be in its 4th printing), and History of the North Tract, An Anne Arundel Time Capsule. In 2001 he retired to Montana and worked as a military security contractor for Blackwater Worldwide making 12 deployments to Iraq and Pakistan from 2004 to 2010. He is now a Reserve Deputy Sheriff in Montana.

People's Court

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

to prosecute him?” The Judge responded, “did you just hear me?” Dick was not sure how far he could go with this so he apologized by saying words to the effect “Sir, on behalf of the entire State of Maryland I would like to apologize and tell you that so long as you quit drinking and then trying to direct traffic on Route One this likely will never happen again.”

Once one of our prosecutors (who shall remain nameless) was stopped for a traffic offense and given a ticket. Because they travelled from location to location, they took their gear with them which included a rubber stamp that said “Nolle Prose,” which roughly translates out to “dismissed.” After getting the ticket he then stamped it “Nolle Prose.” The cop then writes him another ticket. Which is again stamped “Nolle Prose” and handed back out the window of his car. I am not sure if the police officer ran out of tickets, or the prosecutor got tired of stamping them “Nolle Prose.”

Defendants

There was a defendant who was frequently arrested and was an employee of my family's business. Sober, not a finer nor more God-fearing man and a veteran at that. He grew up playing with my Uncle Sonny in our backyard. On the other hand, he would drink on Friday nights and often ran afoul of the police. Sometimes formally arrested and sometimes not. One night very late and after midnight, I was working and wanted to go home and decided to take him with me rather than risk him walking home. While the officers on duty thought it was premature to release him, I managed with their help to get him in my car and drive him home. He then refused to get out of my car and I had to drive him back

to the police station and beg for help to get him out of my car. No good deed goes unpunished.

While I normally worked in the Laurel office, there were times I had to travel to other offices in the county. My cousin, Candy, used to go to work with me now and then because it was so interesting. I remember one long night in Seat Pleasant when the County Police made an arrest for what was then DWI. The police officer was named Eugene and the facts were: Eugene was at the driver's door of a car he had stopped when he felt a car drive by and almost hit him. The driver, while being advised of the charges against him, would admit (although not required nor asked) to all but the DWI and shout not guilty and demand a retest in the office. Alcohol makes you do strange things.

Another time that Candy was with me, there had been a fight at a party and a woman came into the office wearing a wig over her head bandages from the Emergency Room at the old Prince George's Hospital.

There was another case during the holiday season when a small-town police chief found one of his in-laws at the party and knew him to have an outstanding warrant. I am not sure whether they ate first or not but I am pretty sure that was the end of the family event.

On the whole, the People's Court was a remarkable institution where justice was done and the law respected.



C. Philip Nichols, Jr., served as the 19th Chief Judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit of Maryland and is a Laurel native.

Russett/Maryland City

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

at his daughter's schools and then with the Russett community. While biking and walking the neighborhood, he noticed potentially problematic issues. “It's a great community, and I wanted it to remain that way,” he says. So he became active, joining forces with the Home Owners Association and Board of Directors.

Devon chose Russett for its beautiful, park-like environment, wildlife, community trails, and proximity to Baltimore and Washington, DC, and likes the community's diversity and its intelligent and good neighbors.

Happenings At Maryland City Library at Russett

The Maryland City Library at Russett is one of 14 libraries located throughout Anne Arundel County. Completed in 1998, the Russett Branch is more than 15,000 square feet—with an initial collection of 80,000 items. The library is located on two acres in Russett.

Tea and Treasures (Jan. 31 at 2 pm)

Bring a small, treasured object and share a short history of what makes this special, or just come to listen. Enjoy a delightful cup of tea as we enjoy the stories.

Paper Circuit Greeting Cards (Feb. 8 at 7 pm)

Using a simple electric circuit, make a greeting card that lights

up! Geared towards adults/seniors, but teens are welcome. **Valentine Storytime and Craft (Feb. 12 at 2 pm)** Get ready for Valentine's Day with books, rhymes, and music. Make a valentine card for someone special.



Brenda Zeigler-Riley is a 15-year resident of Russett, a retired educator, and entrepreneur with a marketing, public relations, and fundraising background. Please send information on Russett/Maryland City (historical pieces, stories from first responders, hometown memories, resident profiles, etc.) to russett.mdcinfo@gmail.com.



Doris “Dani” Duniho

First and only female mayor of Laurel served from 1986 to 1990

Ms. Duniho served as the City of Laurel’s first woman Mayor from 1986 to 1990, elected by an overwhelming vote of 912 to 383. One of her top priorities was improving public transportation, including offering midday and late-night train and bus service. During her term, she also pressed for funding parks and recreation projects and improvements to city streets and sidewalks.

Mayor Duniho was the daughter of the late Col. And Mrs. Peter J. Negri and was raised in Ocala, Florida. She was married to Michael “Mickey” A. Duniho for over 55 years, and they were blessed with two sons.

Mayor Duniho served as a member of the Laurel City Council from 1980 to 1986. She was only the fourth woman to serve on the City Council—becoming the Council President in 1983.

Prior to becoming Mayor, Ms. Duniho was the Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Public Works and Chair of the Public Safety Committee.

She also served on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and was a charter member of both the Laurel Oratorio Society and Board of Trustees for the Prince George’s County Arts Council. Duniho-Nigh Community Park on Van Dusen Road was named in her honor by the City of Laurel.

Mayor Duniho and her husband Mickey were retired and living in Tucson, Arizona at the time of her passing on November 21, 2021.



Charles Glunt, 75

Former Laurel Police Officer



Charles Ray Glunt, Jr., 75, of Westminster, Maryland, died Saturday, November 13, 2021 at his home. Born May 24, 1946 in Lewistown, PA, he was the son of the late Charles R. Glunt, Sr. He grew up and lived with William and Anne Warfield in Orbisonia, PA. Before retiring he worked as a police officer. He served as a sniper in the Marine Corps during Vietnam and was a Purple Heart recipient. He also enjoyed working as the business manager of American Legion Post 60 in Laurel. He is survived by children Cassie Glunt (Ronald Hardesty), Melanie Boone, Betsy Hansen, Charles R. Glunt, III, Darren Glunt and Michelyn Rogers; a sister, Terry Jones (Bobby) and 12 grandchildren. He was predeceased by his brother Ronald William Glunt (1947–2020).

Richard Blankenship, Jr., 47

Firefighter, Owner of Laurel’s House of Horror

Richard E. “Cat” Blankenship, Jr. (47) passed away surrounded by his family on December 20, 2021.

Rich was born on November 29, 1974 in Howard County Maryland. He was the son of Richard and Mary Blankenship. Rich grew up in Laurel, Maryland where he began his career as a firefighter. For twenty (20) years he strived to be one of the best and bravest firefighters Howard County has to offer. He was a “Fireman’s Fireman.”

Rich was the owner of “Laurel’s House of Horror.” His creativity and imagination ran the haunted house in Laurel, Maryland for seven years.

Richard is survived by his wife, Charlene, his parents Richard and Mary, his sister Nicole, his six children; Zachary, Tyler, Alex, Allyson, Andrew Nicholas and his granddaughter Cali Rose. Rich is also survived by his aunts, cousins, and his fellow brothers and sisters at Howard County Fire and Rescue.

If desired, the family suggests donations to Savage Volunteer Fire Company, 8521 Corridor Road, Savage, MD 20763 or Laurel Volunteer Fire Department, 7411 Cherry Lane, Laurel, Maryland 20707.



OBITUARIES

William E. Mott, 65

Musician, heart transplant recipient

On October 4th, 2021, William E. Mott, 65, of Berlin, Maryland passed away peacefully in his sleep. Bill was a heart transplant recipient of 26 years and the longest surviving transplant patient from Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Bill was born in Fall River, Massachusetts on July 5th, 1956. The family moved to Laurel, Maryland in 1963 when his father, a retired Master Chief in the U.S. Navy, accepted a job at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab.

Bill attended St. Mary's of the Mills Catholic School and Laurel High School. Bill was an outstanding athlete and one of the star pitchers of his class. He was affectionally nicknamed "Big Daddy Mott" throughout his baseball career.

Bill went on to attend Prince George's Community College, where he continued to play baseball at the college level. He then transferred to the University of Maryland, where he earned his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

Bill was an accomplished musician, singer/songwriter, and guitar teacher. He formed the group "The Mott Squad," which played the Baltimore/Washington area back in the 1980s, and which Bill shared with local talent, family, and friends. In 1997, Bill released a self-produced album called *Dancing With Angels*, on which he provided vocals and his endless talent at guitar.

He received just as much joy teaching as he did performing, working with young students who looked up to him as he helped them craft their talents and build confidence, with the care and patience he was known for.

He participated in the 1996 U.S. Transplant Olympics, playing singles and doubles in tennis and won a gold medal in the doubles tennis category.

He is preceded in death by his parents David and Elizabeth Mott. Bill is survived by the remaining members of the original Mott Squad, his eldest brother David Mott and wife Sharon, and sisters Sharon Mott Hegarty and husband Mike and Dayle Mott Rudel and husband Rich. He is also survived by his two nieces, Kelly Kopicki Williams (Chris) and Jenna Rudel, his two nephews Brian Mott (Jamie) and Michael Mott (Hayley), and several nieces and nephews that he adored.

Wherever Bill went in life, he'd meet people who he'd add to his constantly growing circle of friends, who eventually became part of the family. Whether he was pitching in a baseball game, writing his own music, or helping a student master their favorite song, his true passion in life was people and sharing his gifts with those he loved.

Bill is now dancing with angels for eternity.



Ted Dulaney

Mayor Craig A. Moe is sorry to announce the passing of Mr. Teddy R. Dulaney, former City of Laurel Director of the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Dulaney began his career with the City in the Department of Public Works in 1985 as a Laborer II. He was promoted in 1986 to Project and Facilities Inspector then promoted to Engineering Coordinator in 1990, and Deputy Director in 1993. Mr. Dulaney was appointed Director of Public Works by Mayor Moe in 2002 where he served until his retirement in 2007.

Two major projects that Ted was an integral part of were the Laurel Factory House/Laurel Museum and the Fairall Foundry Public Works Complex.

Throughout his career, Ted was a consummate team player who enjoyed his work. Ms. Kristie Mills, former City Administrator, remembers that "Ted always wanted to do a good job, get things done quickly and efficiently. He had a heart for Laurel ..."

City Administrator Lou Ann Crook remembers Ted's meticulous work preparing the annual General Operating and Capital Improvement Program Budgets. "Ted was a good planner, was realistic in his anticipation of project and operational costs. He really worked hard to guarantee the best value in the use of City taxpayer funds."

Kathryn Adair Nuzback, 90

Original co-owner of Nuzback's Bar



Kathryn Adair Nuzback, 90 of Laurel, Maryland, passed away December 3rd, 2021.

She was born in 1931 to Joseph Hess and Nina Belle Siple Hess in Beltsville, Md.

Adair was a member of St. Mary's Church and the American Legion.

Once her family was grown she continued to work with her late husband running the family business, Nuzback's Bar, and then moving to Florida to enjoy her retirement.

She enjoyed traveling, family get togethers, especially the 4th July, Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving and vacationing at the sea shore, her face would always light up when family was all together. She also enjoy her friends while working and occasionally taking time out to play shuffle board.

She is survived by her sister Jean Richards and Jean's son Eddie Saner. Adair is also survived by her children Gail Fore, Peter Nuzback Jr., his wife Crystal, Brendan Nuzback and his partner Jenny, Kathryn Nuzback, Mary Bredice, Richard Nuzback, his wife Sharon, Stephen Nuzback and Rita Fallon, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by Peter T. Nuzback (Husband), Daniel W. Nuzback (Son) Blaise J. Nuzback (Son), her Granddaughter Dakota, Son-in-Law Brian Fallon and Granddaughter-in-law Christine Mullikin.



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