



The Queen Anne's Chronicle

CELEBRATING QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

INFORMING THE CITIZENS

WHY SO MANY HORSES IN QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY?

Horses have always played important roles in Queen Anne's County, and to this day horse/human relationships here remain vibrant and deep.

In times past, County residents depended on these big animals for transportation and farm work, as well as for recreational pursuits like fox hunting and racing. Some of this history is recounted in "The Horse Racing Heritage of Queen Anne's County" on page 3 in this issue.

We no longer need horses for transporting goods and persons or for pulling the plow, but the advent of the internal combustion engine did not take horses out of life in this part of the world. Today Queen Anne's County is home to 1700 horses, and Maryland has more horses per acre than any other state.

Why are there that many horses in a county that primarily uses its land, with great success, for crops (#1 in the State for wheat, soybeans, and corn)? What are the roles of horses in County life now?

Horses Helping People

For our young, for our disabled and handicapped, and for our wounded warriors, horses can be a wonderfully effective means for aiding recovery and developing necessary life skills. We report on these dimensions in "The Healing Horses of Talisman" on page 2 and "4-H Horse Clubs – A Growing Experience" on page 3.

Horse Sports

Certainly one reason we have a lot of horses is because horseback-riding as a sport is popular here. The sport takes many forms: jumping, dressage, barrel racing, pole-bending, rodeo, roping, jousting (the official State sport), hunting, and racing, to name a few.

Like other sports, these horse sports provide the benefits of exercise, the challenge of developing a skill, the thrill of events and competition (if you decide to compete), and the pleasures of social interaction with



Queen Anne's County Born

Photo Credit – Penny Griffith

people who have similar interests. And then there is the enjoyment of being outdoors and riding on trails or through the countryside.

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IT'S OFFICIAL: ANOTHER BIG BUDGET SURPLUS

The County's operating surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013 was over \$10 million, marking a second year of big surpluses.

That's what emerges from the latest Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) that became available on the County website at the end of last December. But there's more to the story:

How did this surplus happen? How was it spent? How was that decided?

Back in 2012, when the *Chronicle* was totally surprised by the first surplus, we said: "Going forward, the *Chronicle* will try to do a better job of informing citizens about a subject that is vital to our common welfare but too often can be made to seem beyond our grasp."

So here's our take on the surplus.

How the Surplus Happened

The budget for FY 2013, adopted by the County Commissioners on June 12, 2012, was, like its FY 2012 predecessor, a break-even budget: both revenues and expenditures for 2013 were projected at \$108 million.

The reality, however, once again turned out to be very much better than the budget projections. As the CAFR reports, revenues

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QAC HORSES BY THE NUMBERS

Horses in QAC	1700
Horses owned/Horses boarded for others	1370/330
Number of equine places*	380
Equine-related acreage	3,400
Total value of horses	\$11 million
Total value of horse-related assets**	\$74.2 million
Annual equine capital expenditures***	\$1.4 million

* Boarding facilities, commercial and private breeding places, farms, commercial race-related places, private residences with horses for recreational purposes

** Land, fences, buildings

*** Purchases of horses, equipment, real estate and improvements

Source: 2010 Maryland Equine Census

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THE HEALING HORSES OF TALISMAN

It is impossible to come away from Talisman Therapeutic Riding in Grasonville without being convinced of the value of its mission and affected by the dedication of its supporters. Its beautiful setting on Talisman Farm makes it special too, located as it is on nearly 1000 acres of preserved fields, woods, waterfront and wetlands overlooking Prospect Bay.

Since ancient times, people have recognized the successes of horses in helping people with disabilities and certain kinds of illnesses. Like therapy dogs, part of the magic of the human-horse relationship results from companionship and from caring activities like grooming and feeding.

With horses, there is also the added physical benefit that being on horseback provides. Riding requires use of the entire body and provides neuromuscular stimulation. As many of us learned during the last Presidential campaign, Ann Romney credits her success in dealing with multiple sclerosis to therapeutic equestrian activities – in her case, dressage.

A talisman is an object that confers magical powers — and, in case after case, the horses at Talisman Therapeutic Riding work their magical powers. In so doing, they fulfill the center's stated mission: "To serve many who can benefit by the talismanic healing nature of horses and the guidance of professional therapists and instructors in a peaceful farm setting."

Talisman Therapeutic Riding

Founded by a visionary and dedicated Queen Anne's County resident, Anne Joyner, Talisman Therapeutic Riding is barely two years old, but it has already achieved remarkable successes. For its participants, ranging in age from 3 to 68, progress comes in different sizes, but each success is an important achievement. One youngster, age 5, came to Talisman not having any words. Much to everyone's delight, after a number of sessions he could say three, "whoa", "walk on" and "more."

Talisman gets referrals from a wide variety of sources, including Veterans Centers, Fort Meade, the National Institute of Health, the Benedictine Center, schools, doctors, courts, and therapists. All its programs are given by certified instructors and therapists with the help of volunteers. The programs address a variety of physical, cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral needs:

- For children with cognitive and physical disabilities



High Five at Talisman Therapeutic Riding

— Photo Courtesy TTR

including cerebral palsy, autism, severe brain trauma, muscular dystrophy and a number of genetic disorders, there is **TheraPony**;

- For teens who are referred by community-based organizations, educators and the courts, there is **Talisman Teen Riding (TTRiding)**;

- For young adults and adults with conditions such as stroke, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, obesity and other limiting conditions, there is **Young Adult Therapeutic Riding (YATR)** and **Adult Therapeutic Riding (ATR)**;

- For all ages, there is **Hippotherapy**, like the other

programs but under the supervised instruction of a certified physical, occupational, or speech language pathologist; and

- For Wounded Warriors, injured veterans and first responders with physical limitations and/or post-traumatic stress disorder, there is **Heroes on Horses**.

Veterans Retreat

Over the years, the once magnificent Talisman Farm fell into disrepair. With contributions of time, talent and treasure, the land is now being cared for, and some of the buildings are being restored and repurposed.

One particularly noteworthy restoration is the Veterans Retreat Cottage. It is an appealing, well-equipped and accessible cottage where participants in the Heroes on Horses program can stay with their families while they are taking part in therapy sessions. In fact, families and friends of all those receiving therapy are very much a part of the scene at Talisman as they come to cheer on the progress of a participant. There are picnic tables overlooking the fields and water, and folks enjoy lingering together in this place of healing, often spending the day.

Talisman's Horses

At present, Talisman has four horses. They are carefully chosen "free-lease" horses, not owned by the center, but cared for by it. Anne Joyner says: "Each one has their own personality. Above all they show tremendous care and love for their riders."

The horses come to Talisman for a variety of reasons – the young owner going off to college, or the upkeep is just too much. The owners often come and continue to ride their horses. Ongoing renovations to the stable will allow Talisman to expand to seven horses.

Future program expansion is also being planned. One reason why Talisman Farm was chosen for the therapeutic riding center is its location on a school bus route, making it convenient for dropping off children with disabilities so that they can participate in the special after-school program Talisman wants to establish.

Financial aid is provided for 60% of the students and all of the Wounded Warriors. Talisman is a non-profit organization whose revenue comes from its annual appeal, from grants, fund-raising events, and rider fees. Its dedicated volunteers are key to the success of this very worthwhile endeavor.

For more information, go to www.TalismanTherapeuticRiding.org or call 443-239-9400.

Why So Many Horses, continued from Page 1

The fact that all these benefits are the result of a partnership with a beautiful, large and intelligent animal adds a unique dimension to these equestrian activities.

Horse-related Businesses

QAC has numerous small businesses that are built around horses: boarding, training, breeding, horse barn-building, tack and horse van sales, veterinary, farrier, fence construction, riding lessons. We have 13 licensed horse-boarding facilities. And many breeds, as diverse as the Spanish-heritage Paso Fino, the American Quarter Horse, the Appaloosa, and the Welsh Pony, are raised here.

Excellent Facilities

Queen Anne's County is blessed with excellent facilities for the events and competitions at the 4-H Park. It has a large

number of stalls, a large ring, night lights, and a judging booth and bleachers. There is no other facility like it on the Shore, and it allows QAC to offer many horse-related activities.

There is a 15 mile horse trail at Conquest Beach outside of Centreville that will eventually be expanded to 10 miles. There are trails on Wye Island (check conditions at 410.827.7577). And there is the "Nemo" Niedomanski Equestrian Trail in the 300-acre park off Rt. 8 South, skirting an environmentally-protected area adjacent to Price Creek. All have parking.

At Tuckahoe State Park, which we share with Caroline County, the Tuckahoe Equestrian Center has access to 15 miles of horse trails. The Center itself has a barn with several stalls, a club-house and picnic area, and an outdoor arena with announcer's stand.

For many among us, then, horses are integral to life here in QAC. They always have been, and clearly continue to be, a

valuable part of what, as recognized in our Comprehensive Plan, is our "quintessential rural community".



Trail Riding in QAC

Photo Credit – David Godfrey

THE HORSE RACING HERITAGE OF QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

BY MARY MARGARET REVELL GOODWIN

All records at both the county and town level for the Eastern Shore indicate horse racing was the primary sport of the men. The rivalry amongst plantation owners and men of repute in Queen Anne's, Talbot, and Kent counties was intense, with large purses put up for many of the races. The taverns in Centreville often sponsored the races, held purses put up by others, and offered some of their own. As early as 1803, Centreville had its own Jockey Club.

Emory and Wright

In Queen Anne's County in the early 1800's, two men were the top horse breeders, Thomas Emory and Robert Wright. Both took passionate care with the breeding of their horses. They also spent considerable sums in wagering on their horses. When Thomas Emory died and Poplar Grove was up for sale in October of 1842, the names of four winning horses were listed first in the ad: Grecian Princess, Irby, Queen Anne, and Sambo, "all winners". These horses were running in races up to four miles, and traveling to races outside of Maryland.

Sambo's description would make him the envy of any Kentucky Derby enterpriser: "a beautiful bay with black legs, mane and tail". Nearly two dozen of the greatest American runners of early American racing were in his pedigree.

Another great racing horse, John Richards, came to Queen Anne's County in 1826 from Virginia to stand for mares here. Having won races at both the two-mile and beyond, and in one race with a purse of \$40,000, he was much prized as a sire for a new line of racers.

Happy Bee and Happy Lady

By the late 1800's, another Emory, E.B. (Edward), had an outstanding reputation for his horse-racing with trotters. His star horse's national reputation was sealed in 1891 when Happy Bee won more than five major races with large purses. Happy Bee was written up in the *Springfield, Illinois Journal* after her win and called "one of the best four year-olds ever campaigned"!

Another of his great trotters was Happy Russell, whose yearling Happy Lady was also a great winner and for whom was named Happy Lady Lane in Centreville next to the Post Office. At two years old in 1891, she was shown off in a mile demonstration between races at Pimlico: quite the little trotter.

E.B. was a dedicated horseman in intense competition with John Godwin here. In a showdown race between the two of them, men bet their farms on the race! Those who bet against the Emory horse were the losers, as his Avonmore won the day. Besides the man who bet his entire farm on the wrong horse, another wiped out his complete bank account, according to the *Baltimore Sun*.

Race Tracks and Roads

Bowlingly in Queenstown, of War of 1812 fame, had its own racetrack in the late 1800's. It was a hotel in those days making an effort to offer visitors the best of Queen Anne's County. Tourists came from Baltimore to Queenstown by steamer to catch the train for Lewes or points in between. The race track was another way of keeping the tourists here before they went onward to the ocean, as well as offering another racing venue for our horse-loving men.

Trotters were the racers of note into the 1900's in Queen Anne's County, with many farms building training tracks for them. Centreville had its own race track going back in post-Civil War times, Taylor's Park, on the grounds now occupied by Walgreen's store and parking lot. In the 1880's, as many as 700 visitors came to view the races there, and in 1890 a race there still drew more than 600 people.

Today, racing no longer holds a prominent place in life here, although there is still one prominent trotter farm. There are two tracks in Maryland where these horses race, Rosecroft and Ocean Downs. In 2013 one of those horses at 11 years of age was named "Horse of the Year" at Ocean Downs. Compared to the past, however, life is poorer for the loss of this great sport among us.

I have to add that among the records I have read, from cover to cover, are the coroner inquests, and these tell another side of the tale. In the early days, racing was one of the chief causes of death! Men would be racing down roads and be knocked off their speeding horse by a low-hanging limb, and either it or the ground they fell on was enough to cause serious damage that ultimately resulted in death.

We drive these same roads today, never realizing how men won and lost money on them with their horses and even put their lives at risk.

Centreville Historian Mary Margaret Revell Goodwin has led the War of 1812 commemoration on the Eastern Shore. She is completing a book on the War of 1812 on the Eastern Shore scheduled for December of this year, and working on a major new book, enriching and updating Emory's late 19th century account, on the history of Centreville and Queen Anne's County.



1930's Sulky Racing on the Walgreen's Site near Centreville

— Centreville History Collection of M.M.R. Goodwin

4-H HORSE CLUBS: A GROWING EXPERIENCE

One of the most compelling things about our annual County Fair at the 4-H Park is the opportunity to watch our young people interacting with their animals. Handling and providing for a huge animal weighing hundreds of pounds is a challenge — especially if you are not full-grown.

No place is this interaction more evident than in the Horse Barn and Ring. The skilled care and true respect given to each animal by the 4-H youngsters is reflected in the way the stalls are decorated, in the way the horses are treated, and in the human/animal bond that is so evident.

The Horse Clubs

In QAC there are three 4-H Horse Clubs: Dream Riders, Pony Express, and Wags and Whinnies. (In the last of these, as the name indicates, the horses share time with dogs.) The Queen Anne's County 4-H Program, part of the University of Maryland Extension, sponsors more than a dozen clubs for students from 8 to 18. Each is led by trained volunteers, many of them 4-H'ers

when they were young, and each focuses on projects or programs such as Livestock or Llamas or Shooting Sports — or Horses.

The QAC 4-H Horse Clubs encourage and support everything to do with their program — keeping a horse and the sport of riding — but, as with all the 4-H clubs, their aim is to do that and more. Christine Johnston, the 4-H Extension Educator for QAC, describes the 4-H horse-related programs as "youth development in which the horse is the vehicle by which we teach important life skills."

Life Skills

Naturally enough, in addition to the exercise, skill development, and social interaction that are the well-known benefits of participation in any sport, 4-H Horse Club members learn responsibility by meeting the considerable demands of caring for a horse.

Beyond that, 4-H makes a point of developing youngsters' skills in public speaking and record keeping, and a commitment to serving the community. At their regular meetings, Horse Club members engage in mostly horse-related activities that develop

these attributes, such as teaching fellow club members about an equine subject, keeping a record book, or participating in a trail clean-up.

Other activities for Horse Club 4-H'ers include a course in hippology, where they develop decision-making skills through activities like judging the best horse based on conformation. The 4-H'ers find out what constitutes a good diet for horses, they learn horse anatomy, and they study the different breeds of horses, their history, and their uses.

The Horse Bowl, and Beyond

Many of the youngsters love participating in the popular Maryland State Horse Bowl, which is like *It's Academic* and is organized by age level (next Bowl is March 15 in College Park). The knowledge required to compete at the senior level of the Horse Bowl is similar to that of a college-level veterinary science

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CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

Here are the local candidates who will be on the June 25 Primary Ballots. School Board candidates will appear only on the November General Election Ballot.

Democratic Ballot

- Representative in Congress, Congressional District 1: **John LaFerla, Bill Tilghman**
- State Senator, Legislative District 36: none
- House of Delegates, Legislative District 36 (vote for no more than three, selecting no more than one from each county)
 - from Caroline County: **Robert Thornton**
 - from Cecil County: none
 - from Kent County: none
 - from Queen Anne's County: **Irving Pinder**
- County Commissioner (vote for one from each district and one at-large)
 - At-large: **Suzanne Hogan**
 - District 1: none
 - District 2: **Fred McNeil**
 - District 3: none
 - District 4: none
- State's Attorney: none
- Sheriff: **Kevin Rhodes**
- Clerk of the Court: none
- Register of Wills: **Debbie Callahan**
- Judge of Orphans Court (vote for no more than three): **Stan Ruddle, Thomas Walsh**
- Democratic Central Committee (vote for no more than seven): **Kenneth Addison, Jim Campbell, Linda Coveleskie, Suzanne Hogan, Elaine McNeil, Virginia Patterson, Tom Rider, Thomas Walsh**

Republican Ballot

- Representative in Congress, Congressional District 1: **Jonathan Goff, Andy Harris**
- State Senator, Legislative District 36: **Steve Hershey, Richard Sossi**

- House of Delegates, Legislative District 36 (vote for no more than three, selecting no more than one from each county)
 - from Caroline County: **Jeff Ghrist**
 - from Cecil County: **Rod Heinze, Alan McCarthy, Michael Smigiel, J.D. Uhler**
 - from Kent County: **Jay Jacobs**
 - from Queen Anne's County: **Steve Arentz**
- County Commissioner (vote for one from each district and one at-large)
 - At-large: **Jim Moran**
 - District 1: **Paul Comfort, Gene Legg, Jack Wilson**
 - District 2: **Tim McCluskey, Bob Simmons, Steve Wilson**
 - District 3: **Robert Buckey, Philip Dumenil, Larry Lauterbach**
 - District 4: **Mark Anderson, Dave Olds, Joann Wilkerson**
- State's Attorney: **Lance Richardson**
- Sheriff: **Livingston Banks, Gary Hofmann**
- Clerk of the Court: **Scott MacGlashan, Roger Twigg**
- Register of Wills: **Linda Austin, Laura Cook, Dave MacGlashan, George O'Donnell, Vito Tinelli, Kevin Waterman**
- Judge of Orphans Court (vote for no more than three): **Kim Calvert, Kimberly Cascia, Joseph DiPietro, Barry Donadio, Steve Hoofnagle, Penelope Keating, Richard Smith, Eric Wargotz**
- Republican Central Committee (vote for no more than seven): **Carol Bilek, Laura Bogley-Knickman, Michael Cogan, Barry Donadio, Timothy Kingston, Karl Milligan, Roger Twigg, Kevin Waterman**

COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS

Here are selected items summarized from approved minutes and QACTV coverage of the County Commissioners' meetings.

January 14, 2014. The Commissioners:

- Approved a beach permit plan, with annual and/or daily fees to support additional maintenance, for vehicles parking at the increasingly popular Terrapin Nature Area, Matapeake Beach, and Ferry Point Park.
- Approved, as one of the five supporting counties, decision of Chesapeake College to expend unrestricted fund balance for upgrade of the College's central computer system and for a "refresh" of the 800 desktop computers, all of them 5 to 9 years old, used by faculty, staff and students.
- Received information on approval by the State of \$50K from the Maryland Waterway Improvement Fund, financed by the 5% boat purchase tax, for County-wide public boating facility improvements.
- Heard, beginning at QACTV 65:04, an informative 24-minute presentation from a State health care official on the new Affordable Care Act **health insurance exchanges**, the different coverages available, and how to enroll.
- Heard a report on the State's recent recognition of and praise for the level of care provided by Hospice of Queen Anne's.
- Recognized Wesley Bodin, President of Rebuilding Together (formerly Christmas in April) in QAC for his 15 years of leadership of this all-volunteer organization that repairs the homes of low-income, elderly or handicapped persons.
- Reviewed, with the Sudlersville Volunteer Fire Department, progress on preserving the Old Sudlersville Middle School Building as the only large facility in the north County that can be used for training, emergency shelter, and large meetings.
- Heard one person speak at Press and Public Comment.

January 28, 2014. The Commissioners:

- Appointed, Commissioners Simmons and Dunmyer opposed (for reasons stated by them beginning at QACTV 2:58), William Sylvester and Robert Priest to the **Planning Commission**.
- Declared February to be the Month of Respect,

upon presentation by Character Counts/Youth Development Coordinator Jackie Carter, and after receipt of reports on the mission of the QAC Child Abuse Response & Evaluation (CARE) Center.

- Held a hearing, at which five persons testified in favor, on proposed ordinance No. 13-28 introduced by Commissioner Dunmyer to recognize, with a tax setoff, services provided by municipalities instead by the County.
- Received a report, from Emergency Services Director Aftung, on improved EMS delivery options for the north County.
- Received a request from School Superintendent Williamson for additional funding to allow inclusion of certain elements in the Stevensville Middle School Renovation (e.g. roof replacement, cafeteria addition, stage).
- Heard one person speak at Press and Public Comment.

February 11, 2014. The Commissioners:

- Heard a report from the Department of Public Works on new grant opportunities from the State for expansion and maintenance of the **County's system of trails**.
- Approved \$1.35 million in additional capital funding for the Stevensville Middle School renovation project, contingent on Department of Public Works engineering oversight of bid documents/bidding process for future school projects.
- Received a **Financial Status Update** from Budget & Finance Director Seeman, which included a report that FY 2014 expenditures are now projected at \$1.8M below budget, while revenues are projected at \$1.9M above budget.
- Received an update from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation on several matters of cooperation and common interest between CBF and the County, including a joint pilot project to explore reduction of watershed improvement costs through trading between sectors.
- Approved Ordinance No. 13-28 (see above).
- Approved a resolution authorizing the **FY 2014 bond** sale in the amount of \$24 million.
- [No one spoke at Press and Public Comment]

The Queen Anne's Chronicle

The Queen Anne's Chronicle is published by
Queen Anne's Conservation Association.

Chris Pupke — Chairman of the Board
Jay Falstad — Executive Director

Mary Campbell — Editor

Queen Anne's Conservation Association (QACA), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, is the Eastern Shore's oldest conservation organization. Its mission is to promote stewardship of Queen Anne's County's natural resources and to protect its rural character and small towns while encouraging the management of prudent and sustainable growth.

Queen Anne's Conservation Association

P.O. Box 157 | Centreville, MD 21617 | www.QACA.org

4 Back issues of *The Queen Anne's Chronicle* can be accessed at www.qaca.org



The Ospreys Are Coming!

Photo credit — David Godfrey

ENCOUNTERS WITH WHITE OWLS

BY JANE SCOTT

Perhaps this is old news, but this has been a banner year not only for snow, but also for snowy owls. They have turned up all over the East Coast, including one on an overhead lane-marker on the eastbound Bay Bridge. One was even hit by a bus in downtown Washington. (At last report, she was recovering in rehab.)

The Snowy Owl

The largest owl in North America, and pure white, a male snowy owl is an impressive sight. They are birds of the treeless tundra, so perhaps it is not surprising that they have been spotted in farm fields near Church Hill and Chestertown and have appeared at BWI and Reagan National airports. They also like the view from sand dunes, apparently, as several have been seen on



Snowy Owl carrying American Black Duck prey

Photo credit – Chuck Honder d/b/a Focus on Wildlife

Delaware's beaches and at Assateague Island, feeding on dead fish.

So what's going on? The normal range of the snowy owl is circumpolar, the arctic regions around the top of the world, where they chase lemmings in the snow. They eat a lot of them, three to five a day! They also hang around holes in the pack ice looking for seabirds. While they often move into Canada and the far northern U.S. in winter, this year has been an aberration – with one snowy owl traveling as far as Florida.

Traditionally, it has been thought that these so-called “irruptions” were caused by a lack of available food, like a precipitous drop in lemming populations. But it could be quite the opposite.

It is well known that snowy owls do not breed at all in periods of scarcity, but when food is abundant they can produce up to nine eggs per pair. Perhaps a warming arctic caused such a bumper crop of lemmings that the owls produced too many young for the available habitat, forcing many to move south in search of rabbits, voles, mice and waterfowl.

Unlike most owls, snowy owls are diurnal. That is, they feed in the daytime as well as at night. Not surprising when you remember that in an arctic summer, there is no night and virtually no daylight in winter!

The Barn Owl

Last summer, I had another strange owl encounter. I was awakened in the night by an eerie scream that repeated at intervals. What could it be? I thought of night herons, nighthawks, dying rabbits and even lovelorn foxes. Something was going on out there, but it didn't occur to me that it might be an owl. I knew well the soft hoot of the great horned owl, or the “who-cooks-for-you” call of the barred owl, but this was nothing like them. Nor was it the long spooky quaver of a screech owl.

Finally, a friend suggested I go on line and listen to the shriek of a barn owl – and sure enough that was it!

Barn owls are plenty white also, at least on the underside, and their odd pale faces have earned them names like “ghost owl”, “death owl” or “hobgoblin”. A barn owl peering at you from the rafters of a barn or shed would give anyone pause. They are found all over the world, but rarely seen, as they hunt only at night, gliding over the fields in search of voles and other small mammals.

All owls are formidable hunters with sharp talons, strong beaks, and such a silent manner of flying that they can swoop down on their prey with barely a sound. It doesn't surprise me that they have inspired so many eerie legends of ghosts, for that was one scary shriek in the night!

Jane Scott, an Eastern Shore writer and illustrator, is the author of *Between Ocean and Bay: A Natural History of Delmarva* (Centerville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1991), and *Field and Forest, A Guide to Native Landscapes for Gardeners and Naturalist* (Blackburn Press, 2002).



Snowy owls from *Birds of America* by John James Audubon



Barn Owls

Photo Credit – DNR

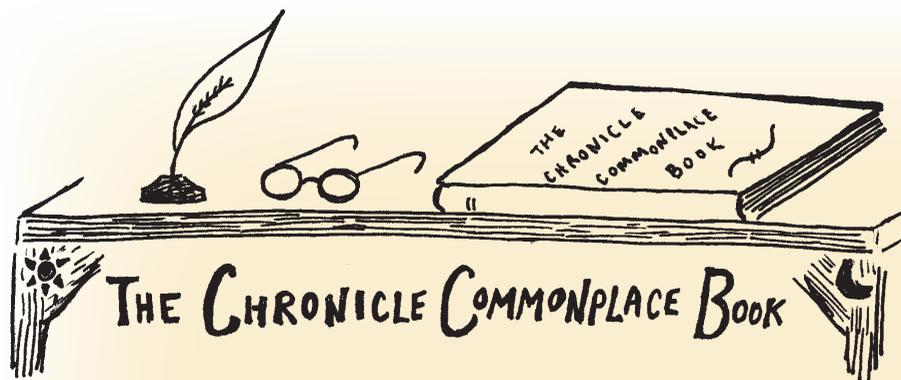
“THE VISION WE SHARE”

The VISION is to continue the ethic that the County remains a quintessential rural community with the overall character of the County preserved as:

- A predominantly rural county with small towns connected by creeks and county roads through fields and forest – **a great place to live;**
- A county that encourages agriculture, seafood and maritime industries, tourism and outdoor sports, small business and high tech enterprise – **a good place to work;**

- A county that is a faithful steward of its natural and cultural heritage – **a good neighbor for the Bay and other Eastern Shore counties;**
- A county in which development does not impair the quality of life enjoyed by all – **a community that protects the expectations and opportunities of all its citizens;**
- A county that supports the **highest quality of education** that seeks to fully prepare its citizens for the future.

(Queen Anne's County 2010 Comprehensive Plan, “Overall Community Vision”, page 2)



✂ **The Naming of Moons.** The various Algonquin tribes gave unique names to each full moon and used the name to designate the whole month in which the full moon occurred. **“March [16]: The Worm Moon.** Snow slowly begins to melt, the ground softens, and earthworms show their heads again and their castings, or fecal matter, can be found. Other signs of spring gave rise to other variations: the cawing of crows (the Crow Moon); the formation of crusts on the snow from repeated thawing and freezing (the Crust Moon); and the time for tapping maple trees (the Sap Moon). . . **April [15]: The Pink Moon.** Flowers begin to appear, including the widespread grass pink or wild ground phlox. Other variations indicate more signs of full spring, such as Sprouting Grass Moon, Egg Moon, and Fish Moon (common among coastal tribes).” – www.moonconnection.com

✂ **Big Old Trees Get Bigger.** Most trees do not slow in their growth rate as they get older. Instead, their growth keeps accelerating, according to a new six-continent study of 403 tree species. For most tree species, mass growth rate increases continuously with tree size — in some cases, large trees appear to be adding the carbon mass equivalent of an entire smaller tree each year. Big old trees are thus better at absorbing carbon from the atmosphere than has been commonly assumed. Carbon that is absorbed (“sequestered”) through natural processes reduces the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and can help counter-balance the amount of CO₂ people generate. — N. L. Stephenson *et al.*, *Nature* (15 January 2014).



Old Black Walnut Tree in Centreville
Photo credit – Maryland Big Trees

✂ **Diseases Resistant to Antibiotics.** “[E]xcessive animal crowding has favored the likelihood of disease and the perceived need to rely on low-dose prophylactic antibiotics to stifle outbreaks. It is critical to recognize that veterinarians must continue to have access to effective antibiotics to treat animals that are clinically ill from bacterial infections. . . However, the practice of routinely administering antibiotics at low-dose concentrations in feed and water for extended periods of time to large populations of animals that lack signs of clinical illness is the surest way to spawn resistant bacteria. Even more threatening, and many would say unethical, has been the industry’s use of low-dose antibiotics for purposes of growth promotion in healthy animals. . .

“[I]f low-dose concentrations of antibiotics continue to be allowed for preventive use (even by prescription), they provide a ‘back door’ through which growth promotion effects can still be exploited under another name. . .

“[T]o truly deal with antibiotics, we are going to have to find innovative ways to reconfigure the production environments on animal farms that are grounded in sound husbandry principles and obviate the need for low-dose antibiotics in any form.” R. J. Tarpley (Texas A & M), *Science* (10 January 2014).

✂ **Keeping Track of QAC Rainfall.** The numbers are in from the Wye Research and Education Center: for 2013, at their location south of Queenstown, they recorded 46.16 inches

of rainfall. At Stevensville, a volunteer with the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) recorded a full two inches less: 44.03 inches. We asked Bruce Sullivan, Maryland State Coordinator for CoCoRaHS, about the differences in rainfall at locations only a few miles far apart from each other. He responded: “I would say from experience that yearly rainfall amounts can vary as much as 8 inches over a county area due to high variability in summer thunderstorm rainfall totals.”

✂ **How Maryland Got Started Later, But Better, Than Virginia.** “During the sixteenth century, Spanish and French colonizers bypassed the long coast north of Florida and south of Acadia (Nova Scotia). They deemed that temperate region too cool for tropical crops but too warm for the best furs. Consequently, the mid-Atlantic seaboard remained open for colonization by the English, who called that entire coast “Virginia”. . .

“[T]he Virginia Company, a cartel of London merchants with a charter from the Crown. . . sent three vessels to the Chesapeake, arriving there in April 1607. Seeking security from Spanish discovery and attack, they sailed up the James River about sixty miles to establish Jamestown beside a swamp on the north bank. . .

“The swampy location proved deadly, for it bred millions of mosquitoes, carriers of malaria. The colonists also suffered salt poisoning from the brackish water of their wells. Those who lived were often too weak and apathetic to work, so they starved. Of the initial 104, nine months later only 38 lived. Between 1607 and 1622 the Virginia Company transported another 10,000 people to the colony, but only 20 percent were still alive there in 1622. . .

“In 1632 the Crown set aside the land at the northern head of Chesapeake Bay as a second colony, named ‘Maryland’ after the queen of the new monarch, Charles I. . . The king gave the new colony to a political ally, Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, to own and govern as a ‘proprietary colony’ [incidentally kicking off a long struggle with William Claiborne over Kent Island]. He promised refuge for his fellow Roman Catholics, who were harassed in England by the Protestant majority. To set a model for toleration, Baltimore’s colony also welcomed Protestants, who became the majority. By attracting experienced colonists from Virginia, Maryland benefited from their expertise. With fewer and shorter growing pains, Maryland rapidly prospered as a tobacco colony.” — Alan Taylor, *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: 2013).

✂ **Orion, Sirius and Jupiter.** The Huntsman is once again tramping across the southern sky, followed by his faithful Dog, brightest star in our heavens. What is that, straight overhead, even brighter? It’s a Wanderer: he’s happened by. But it was the Dog we were watching for: he always comes in the winter night.

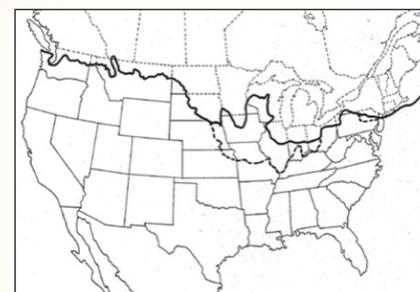
✂ **That Sinking Feeling. . .** “[T]he land in this part of the world is sinking. And that goes back to the last ice age, which peaked some 20,000 years ago.

“As a massive ice sheet, more than a mile thick, grew over what are now Canada and the northern reaches of the United States, the weight of it depressed the crust of the earth. Areas away from the ice sheet bulged upward in response, as though somebody had stepped on one edge of a balloon, causing the other side to pop up. Now that the ice sheet has melted, the ground that was directly beneath it is rising, and the peripheral bulge is falling.

“Some degree of sinking is going on all the way from southern Maine to northern Florida, and it manifests itself as an apparent rising of the sea.

“The sinking is fastest in the Chesapeake Bay region.” — *New York Times*, January 13, 2014 (“Rising Sea Levels Threaten East Coast”)

✂ **Taking Care.** “The land we live on, and the sea we live from, are not bequeathed to us from those who have gone before. They are loaned to us by our children, and we must return them in good condition, not spoiled like an unfinished picnic. . . If we picnic with an abandon that is devoid of care, then ultimately nature will reclaim its own. And on that day, not only will industrial society remember its long forgotten need to praise God and care for creation, but — and too late — society will then realize something of what God’s judgment means.” — Robert A. Gillies, *Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney* (Sept. 2008)



Solid Line: Approximate extent of glaciation during last ice age. Dotted Line: Approximate extent of earlier glaciations. www.iceagenow.com/Ice-Age_Maps



At the County Fair

— Chronicle Photo

course. (“Question: Name six of the joints of the hind limb of the horse. Answer: Sacroiliac; hip; stifle; hock; fetlock; pastern; coffin.”) Having a horse is not a requirement, and participants prepare for the Horse Bowl by researching and by prepping each other. Not infrequently, QAC youngsters are highly successful and make the Maryland State Team and compete in the Nationals.

Success in competitions is not limited to the Horse Bowl. Many of our youngsters meet with

successes in the ring. This last year, a young Queen Anne’s County equestrian team did well competing in the 47th Annual All-American Quarter Horse Congress, the largest single-breed horse show in the world. And a 17 year-old young man from a family farm near Queen Anne won the World Championship in Tie Down Roping and the Reserve World Championship in the American Quarter Horse Youth Association competition.

Hooray for 4-H

How fortunate Queen Anne’s County is to have a strong program like our 4-H Clubs provide. As the Horse Club component of the overall 4-H Program clearly demonstrates, the special bond with horses and other animals that so many youngsters instinctively feel can be used to develop valuable life skills as well as provide the many benefits of participating in a sport. All this is well-captured in the 4-H Pledge:

*I pledge my head to clearer thinking,
My heart to greater loyalty,
My hands to larger service,
and my health to better living,
for my club, my community, my country, and my world.*

Mark your calendar for the next County Fair: August 11-16, 2014.

It’s Official, continued from Page 1

were a remarkable \$9.7 million *over* budget, and expenditures were more than \$800,000 *under* budget. Result: an operating surplus of \$10.5 million.

On expenditures, most County departments came in at or below budget, while revenues were above budget in virtually every category. The big winner on the revenue side was local income tax, coming in at \$39.4 million instead of the budgeted \$32.4 million. After the property tax (essentially on target at \$65.5 million), the income tax is the second biggest source of County revenue by far — so a 22% increase in black ink here meant a lot in a \$108 million budget.

Where the Surplus Went

What did the County do with our unbudgeted operating surplus of \$10.5 million?

The destination for the surplus funds was mainly “capital projects”:

- “Budgeted Transfers Out to General Capital Projects and Roads Capital Projects increased by \$7.2 million during the year. . . . [T]here are several capital projects in which the County plans to move aggressively on, and would like to have fund balance available in the General and Roads Capital Projects fund to cover a portion of the costs.” (CAFR, p. 25) Other miscellaneous transfers brought the draw on the surplus up to \$7.7 million.

The remaining \$2.8 million of surplus went to increase the balance in the County’s principal operating fund, the “General Fund”:

- “At the end of the current fiscal year, the General Fund had a total fund balance of \$16.0 million, which is an increase of \$2.8 million from the fiscal year 2012 balance. . . .” (CAFR, p. 24)

How the Surplus Decisions Were Made

We have a highly-visible, multi-month public process for the adoption of the annual budget. But when the budget’s revenue projections turn out to be way too conservative, the process for deciding on what to do with the resulting surplus is nearly invisible to the public.

Instead of citizens having an opportunity to address

Commissioners about how to spend (or refund) the surplus, the surplus is never publicly announced. Most of it vanishes very quietly, almost automatically, into something as uninformative as a “general capital projects fund”.

To see for yourself the lack of transparency in the handling of the surplus, check out the two short segments on QACTV (www.qactv.com/qactv/) where the surplus comes up (though never by name).

- First, go to QACTV’s **Public Meetings on the Web** and look at the **Commissioner Meetings and Events** for July 9, 2013 beginning at 42:47. If you listen and watch carefully, especially beginning at 45:35, you will hear how plans to “spend over the budget”, by making “transfers to capital projects” like the County Complex and the Court House, get us to where (at 46:17) “the bottom line is — the projection is — we would probably have an excess of revenues over expenditures of about a million and a half dollars — \$1.6 million”. What you will not hear is anything about the surplus that exists *before* these additional “transfers to capital projects” are inserted after the fact.

- Second, check out **Commissioner Meetings and Events** for September 24, 2013, beginning at QACTV 23:43. There, in a proceeding lasting 23 seconds, a FY 2013 “end-of-the-year clean-up” amendment (CC-46) is approved. The amendment declares \$8.4 million in additional General Fund revenue for FY 2013 and transfers from this amount \$5.5 million to “General Capital Projects” and \$1.0 million for “Roads Capital Projects”. This isn’t “clean-up”, this is policy — important policy, even if it is executed in less than half a minute.

To be clear, the *Chronicle* is not advocating any particular uses of budget surpluses. Maybe the FY2013 surplus should have been, as it was, funneled into capital projects. Maybe, on the other hand, it should have been used to do more on back-logged roads maintenance or to meet Board of Education funding requests or other needs. Maybe it should all have been used for a tax refund, which would have effectively cut the property tax rate for 2013 well below where it was before the 2011 tax hike and provided, for example, a check in the mail of \$490 to the owner of a \$350,000 home.

Those “maybes” are not our concern. Our point here is not that the surplus should be used for this or that, but that *the citizens should be better informed*.

Citizens should be told, in clear statements made at open meetings and on the County website, about the existence and amount of surpluses. Citizens should be invited to weigh in on what to do with any surplus, just as they can with the original budget. Then, giving their reasons in full public view, the Commissioners should make the decisions on where the extra money will go.

That isn’t happening now. It wouldn’t be difficult to make it happen.

To find the CAFR, go to the County website (www.qactv.com/), click on the **Finance, Taxes** box. Then at the page for **Budget & Finance Office**, in the menu on the left click first on **Accounting Office**, and then on **Financial Statements**: the tab for **Fiscal Year 2013 CAFR** is at the top of this page.

The 2013 surplus can be ferreted out by going to pp. 107-09 and (1) subtracting the “Original Budget” number from the “Actual” number for “Total Revenues” on page 107 (yielding \$9,713,681 more revenue than originally budgeted) and (2) subtracting the “Actual” number from the “Original Budget” number for “Total Expenditures” on page 109 (yielding \$852,536 less expenditure than originally budgeted). Adding these two results gives the surplus of \$10,566, 217.

In our first struggle with last year’s FY 2012 CAFR, we didn’t do this correctly, but were misled by the CAFR “Actual” number for “Excess of Revenues Over Expenditures” (which doesn’t mean what you might think it does). Thus, after having accurately estimated the FY 2012 surplus at over \$7 million in our November/December 2012 issue, we wrongly put it more than \$3 million higher in our May/June 2013 issue. We regret that error — but we must say that this isn’t easy. The CAFR and the budgets approved by the Commissioners are presented in confusingly different formats. And, as indicated above, nowhere in any document or report can one ever find a simple direct statement that the operating surplus for the year was X number of dollars.

THE REMARKABLE PERFORMANCES OF JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

Not many people walking in the spring woods can come upon a Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) and just keep going. This strange plant always seems to need a closer look. Is that strange central piece a sort of leaf, or is it the flower? Actually, that odd central piece is neither leaf nor flower, and this is a plant that is full of oddities.

Pulpit and Minister

Even its common name is unusual: Jack-in-the-Pulpit. Although you don't see many of them now, there was a time when quite a few churches had "hanging pulpits." There is a hanging pulpit in Old Wye Church, a beautiful 1721 church in Wye Mills. A picture of that pulpit explains the association folks made between what they saw on Sundays and what they came upon in the spring woods.

The pulpit part of the plant is the spathe, and the minister (Jack) is the spadix. The flowers are deep within the pulpit, clustered at Jack's base. These tiny flowers are unusual because while most flowers contain both male and female parts, the flower of the Jack-in-the-Pulpit has either one or the other.



Photo Credits – David Godfrey

Sex Changes

This perennial plant's strangeness continues — it can change from a male to a female plant, or vice versa, from year to year! The plant determines its sex for the next spring in the previous autumn, based on what kind of summer it has had.

Jack-in-the-Pulpits grow from an underground tuber-like storage organ, called a corm, and if, come fall, the corm is full and fat, the plant produces a bud that will result in a female plant. That's because the female has the more demanding job: making and growing seeds appealing to the creatures who will eat and disperse them. In contrast, the male plant has a rather simple job, namely, to produce pollen. Accordingly, should the summer have been hard for the plant and little reserve went into the corm, the plant produces a bud that will become the less demanding male plant.

The leaf of the Jack-in-the-Pulpit consists of three leaflets (often causing it to be confused with poison ivy). The leaves make it easy to identify the sex of the plant. The female Jack-in-the-Pulpit usually has two leaves (*i.e.* a total of 6 leaflets) allowing it to make more sugar to provide energy for its work. The male plant usually has only one leaf (3 leaflets) since its needs are less. Sometimes young plants of either sex — or plants that have been through a particularly difficult summer — will produce only one leaf and notably no flowers at all the following spring.

Reproduction

You would think that having the male and female as separate plants would make pollination difficult — and it does somewhat — but that is where Jack the spadix becomes important. The spadix produces a mushroom smell which is particularly appealing to fungus flies. The flies, looking for fungi to deposit their eggs and attracted by the mushroom odor, fly into the pulpit (spathe). They become confused because the top of the pulpit is blocking the sun and the bottom of the pulpit is light-colored, as you can see in the photos. Seeing the light color, the flies descend to bottom of the spathe where the tiny flowers (about 0.1 millimeter long) are, and there they pick up pollen from the flower if the plant is male or dust pollen onto the flower if the plant is female. By fall, the pollination process has resulted in a stem of bright red berries which are eaten by wild turkeys and wood thrushes.



The Jack-in-the-Pulpit is usually regarded as a poisonous plant. Eating parts of it results in a severe burning sensation and swelling in the mouth. American Indians used the berries for red dye, and apparently during times when

food was very scarce, ate the roots after they had been baked or dried for a long time to destroy the plants' poisonous quality.

A native of the eastern United States, Jack-in-the-Pulpits are said to live as long as 100 years.

They vary in height from one to two feet and you can find them with brown, white or purple stripes decorating the spathe.

Jack in Queen Anne's

These plants flourish here in Queen Anne's County in our bottomlands, bogs and woods. In fact, they so notable on Wye Island that there is a half-mile trail called the Jack-in-the-Pulpit Trail. It's a good place for a walk to see this remarkable plant during April and May.



* A Calendar Of Verses

MARCH: WELCOME HOME

Dear March, come in!
How glad I am!
I looked for you before.
Put down your hat —
You must have walked —
How out of breath you are!
Dear March, how are you?
And the rest?
Did you leave Nature well?
Oh, March, come right upstairs with me,
I have so much to tell! . . .

— Emily Dickinson

APRIL: SPRING COMES SLOWLY

. . . The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky;
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And spring comes slowly up this way.

— S. T. Coleridge