

NEWSLETTER

HOWARD COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

The March, 2009 Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast is scheduled for **8:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 12, 2009** in the Dining Hall at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Please join us.

Our guest speaker will be **Mr. Bob Ensor, District Manager of the Howard Soil Conservation Office**. Mr. Ensor will discuss the relatively new, and perhaps highly controversial, concept of "Carbon Trading". In theory, the effects of excess carbon emissions from one public or private sector can be offset by other sectors that are in a position to serve as a recipient, or perhaps to immobilize, some of these undesirable excess "Greenhouse Gases". Agriculture may be in a position to both help improve the environment and benefit financially by playing an important role.

We hope that you can be present for this informative program. Bring your spouse, and/or a friend. Enjoy the food, the fellowship and a lively and friendly exchange of information. Breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m. and the speaking program will begin at 8:30 a.m.

Please RSVP by noon, Tuesday, March 10, by calling either Charlotte Mullinix, at (410) 489-4510 or Martha Clark at (410) 531-3455. The cost of the breakfast is \$10.00 per person, payable at the door.

The formal part of the program will conclude by 9:00 a.m. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, **March 12**, at the next Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.

President's Message by **Howie Feaga, President** **Howard County Farm Bureau**

The winter has gone rather well, we have had some cold weather and some snow and ice, but we have done better than a lot of other parts of the country. We are not done yet, but with the day's getting longer, we can easily get through what is left.

I had the opportunity to go to the American Farm Bureau Federation annual convention in San Antonio, Texas in early January. It was very interesting to meet so many farmers from all over the country. Our keynote speaker was Bill Bradley, a Hall of Fame basketball star for the New York Knicks and a former U.S. Senator from New Jersey. He assured us, and I agree, that we Americans will get through these tough times and will learn from the mistakes that have been made.

We went on a bus trip into the "Winter Garden" area of Texas and saw where they had already planted potatoes. We visited a feedlot, a beekeeper who had 9,000 bee hives, and a purebred Brahman breeder. We ate lunch in country music star George Strait's home town of Pearsall, TX, though we didn't see him. The food was great.

We are getting ready for our Legislative dinner on April 23 and I would encourage each of you to bring a friend with you who would be interested in hearing some of our legislators give us their updates on how things are going, or to just have a great dinner with friends.

We are trying to keep up with all the new bills that are being introduced. They are read and reviewed to determine whether they are in our best interests or not. We then make our

commitment to be for or against them from an agricultural perspective.

I'm sure everyone is looking forward to spring, and as the days get warmer we seem to pick up the pace. But remember, there will be another good day. You don't have to do it all today. Try to enjoy the new growth of the grass and tree's. And be careful as you begin to run your machines – that's everything from your lawnmowers to your corn planters.

So have a great spring and a prosperous summer. And like always "Keep your plow in the ground; we're all pulling for you".

Greetings from Annapolis
by **Delegate Gail Bates**

Two important subjects for this issue.

THE BUDGET– We are all holding our breath in anticipation of the massive amounts of stimulus greenbacks flowing forth from Washington. Much moolah is targeted to help States get through the problem of falling revenues – Maryland revenues have increased over last year, although not as much as predicted. The stimulus money will mask our overspending penchant and temporarily eliminate structural changes necessary to get our fiscal house in order.

Spending is out of control at both the National and State level. Trying to spend our way out of this problem is like me trying to lose weight by going on an eating binge. Japan tried to do that during the '90s with multiple year spending (Barack Obama-san, WSJ Dec. 16, 2008) and merely prolonged their economic crisis. I've heard it said that mental illness is doing the same things over and over, expecting different results. We should learn from our Japanese counterparts, not repeat their mistakes.

We are in the process of hearing the analysts review of the various departments of the State. They do a very thorough review of each Department's budget and make recommendations as to adequacy of the appropriation as it relates to their stated function. They identify areas of potential deficiency and areas in which the Departments have overspent.

Sometimes, year over year comparisons are difficult to make as fund shifts, deficiencies and budget amendments often complicate the process. Couple this with the impact of the Federal stimulus and uncertainty abounds.

More later as we get a better picture of the whole.

SOIL CONSERVATION BILL – Our Delegation was surprised with a request from County Executive Ulman to introduce a "late-filed" bill to eliminate the role of the Soil Conservation District in the development approval process. Citing budgetary concerns, the Executive believed he could save \$220,000 by taking the sediment review function away from Soil Conservation and have it done in the Department of Planning and Zoning (a department whose budget has grown by \$1 million in the last 2 years).

The Howard County Delegation generally requires bills to be drafted by September in preparation for our hearing in November. This bill request came after the session started in January, thus making it a "late-filed" bill. We sometimes work with this type of bill, if there is a pressing need for it to pass in the current session. The impetus for this bill was a suggestion in a transition report for the Ulman administration prepared two years ago, thus, in my mind not pressing.

Local bills generally receive legislative courtesy in most, but not all cases, and the Administration was confident this bill would fly through easily. The cases in which a local bill does not receive local courtesy is when it could have statewide impact. This bill has statewide impact in that it threatens Soil Conservation District work in each of the 24 State jurisdictions. As a result, word of its consideration spread throughout the State.

Wednesday, February 4, the Delegation held a hearing at the Board of Education on this bill. The Administration presented their case:

- The bill would save \$220,000.
- The bill would streamline the development process.
- Soil Conservation's work was not needed as the County had sufficient expertise.

- The work could be absorbed by people already employed by Planning & Zoning.

Then, Bob Ensor, HSCD Manager, presented his case:

- The Soil Conservation District is independent from the political process.
- The Soil Conservation District has been doing this work since the early 1970s.
- The Soil Conservation District follows Federal, State and Local requirements.

The opposition also included representatives from the Patuxent River Commission and other parties interested in environmental protection.

Before the hearing was over, it was apparent that the Administration had not made their case and the bill was in trouble. As we left the meeting, the Executive's legislative person indicated the bill would be withdrawn. As we approached our weekly voting session, the bill was not included on the list for voting because the Executive asked for it to be held. We shall see if it will be pulled or voted. At present, there does not appear to be sufficient votes to pass.

**Update - Educational and Technical Help
for Small Horse Farm Owners**
as reported in ***Farm Notes, Carroll County
Extension Newsletter, January, 2009***

Where is the largest concentration of horses in the state of Maryland? If you said Central Maryland you would be correct!

This region was awarded a grant as a Chesapeake Targeted Watershed to help small horse farms primarily in Central Maryland with resources conservation practices. Practices include watering troughs, roof runoff structures, waste storage facilities, pasture management, and sacrifice lots. This grant also provides funding for cost share, workshops, pasture walks, and educational/ technical assistance in CARROLL, Frederick, HOWARD, Baltimore, and Harford Counties.

Please contact Mr. Michael Calkins, Soil Conservation Planner, Regional Equine Specialist, with any horse related questions you

might have. Michael covers Carroll, Howard, and Frederick Counties. He can be reached at 410-489-7987 phone, 410-489-9129 fax, Michael.Calkins@md.nacdnet.net email, or 708 Lisbon Center Drive, Suite. E, Woodbine, MD 21797.

Also available to Howard County residents is Ms. Kristen Parris, Equine Specialist Technician, Conservation Planner for the Howard Soil Conservation District. Kristen can be reached at 410-489-7987 phone, 410-489-9120 fax, or through the District web site at www.howardscd.org.

***Baltimore and Carroll County residents can also contact Ms. Ciara McMurtrie, Soil Conservation Planner, Regional Equine Specialist with any horse related questions you might have. She can be reached at 410-666-1188, ext. 3 phone, 410-666-0179 fax, Ciara.McMurtrie@md.nacdnet.net email, or 9831 Van Buren Lane, Cockeysville, MD 21030.

Get More From Grazing
as reported in ***Farm Notes, Carroll County
Extension Newsletter, January, 2009***

A new forage-management tool has been unveiled by forage and grazing specialists from five different states. The new publication offers strategies to extend your grazing season and was developed under the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative.

While the best techniques to accomplish this will vary by region, the authors outline strategies and options that can be used in a variety of areas.

To access "Extending Grazing and Reducing Stored Feed Needs," go to <http://www.aces.edu/dept/forages/ExtendingGrazingReducingStoredFeedNeeds.pdf>.

Source: University of Illinois

Member Benefits
by **Susan Baker, Director**
Howard County Farm Bureau

Are you thinking about a winter get-away break before spring begins? Be sure to consider the

Farm Bureau member benefits that offer discounts and savings on hotels and car rentals. The Wyndham Hotel Group and Choice Hotels together offer 19 different hotel brands and over 11,000 hotels worldwide at which Farm Bureau members may receive a discount. In addition, both Avis and Budget offer car rental discounts to Farm Bureau members.

To learn more about these benefits, as well as many others offered to Farm Bureau members, log on to www.md.farmbureau.com, then click on "Member Services," or call the Maryland Farm Bureau office at 1-800-248-9012 for a benefits brochure.

Winter Issue of *Branching Out*
as reported in ***Farm Notes, Carroll County Extension Newsletter, January, 2009***

The winter issue of *Branching Out* is currently available on the following website: www.naturalresources.umd.edu/Publications/BranchingOut/2008Winter.pdf.

Branching Out is a forest stewardship and natural resources quarterly newsletter published by the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension and provides current information to forest landowners, natural resource professionals and the public.

For further information or questions contact Ellen Green, Forestry Extension Assistant, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension 301-432-2767 x307, or e-mail at egreen13@umd.edu, www.naturalresources.umd.edu.

Howard County Farm Bureau
2009 Legislative Dinner

Plans are being developed for the 2009 Howard County Farm Bureau Legislative Dinner. Mark the date of **April 23** on your calendar now. The location will again be the Lisbon Volunteer Fire Department's Social Hall on Woodbine Road (Route 94) in Lisbon. Details on reservations and cost will be forthcoming very soon in the mail. We encourage you to plan on attending this annual session, listening, and interacting with our legislators. Bring a friend!

Field Crops & Pasture IPM Workshop

Make plans to attend the **Field Crops & Pasture IPM Workshop, Monday, March 16, 2009** at the Davidsonville Family Recreation Center (DFRC) from **6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** This workshop will explore advanced concepts of pasture and field crop production in the Southern Maryland region from establishment to harvest, including animal utilization.

Topics will include: *Crop selection; integrated crop management; soil fertility; weed control; insect control; and disease control for soybeans, corn, wheat, barley and hay crops.*

Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification & Nutrient Applicator Voucher Recertification will be awarded for full class participation. To register for this event, contact the Anne Arundel County Extension Office at 410-222-6759.

23rd Annual Horsemen's Party
by **Kristen Wilson**
Regional Extension Horse Specialist

The 23rd annual Maryland Horsemen's Party will be held on Sunday, October 11, 2009 from 2pm to 5pm at Ten Oaks Ballroom in Clarksville, MD. This is a great opportunity to come out and support the MD 4-H Horse Program. A silent auction, live auction, and raffle will be held at the event, as well as recipients of the Maryland 4-H Horse Program Youth Development Award and Maryland 4-H Horse Program Volunteer of the Year Award will also be recognized.

Proceeds from this event will benefit the Sallie Robertson Memorial 4-H Horse Endowment Fund. The goal of this endowment is to support 4-H horse educational programs and the annual trip for 4-Hers representing Maryland at the Eastern National 4-H Horse Round Up in the areas of horse judging, hippology, horse bowl, demonstrations and public speaking. This endowment also provides scholarships for 4-H volunteers and members to attend leadership conferences and equine-related workshops.

If you would like to learn more about the Sallie Robertson Memorial 4-H Horse Endowment Fund and the MD 4-H Horse Program, please call my office at 301-596-9478. We are hoping you can join us for this great event!

“Poultry Party” Short Course

When: Saturday, March 28, 2009
9 am —12:30 pm

Where: Carroll Community College
Rooms 157 - 159
1601 Washington Road
Westminster, Maryland 21157

TOPICS

- Getting Started with Poultry
- Nutrition and Feeding
- Common Poultry Diseases
- Keep Your Flock Safe and Healthy
- Everything You Wanted to Know About Eggs, but Were Afraid to Ask
- Submitting Birds to the MDA Animal Health Diagnostic Lab

This free seminar is open to all small flock owners.

Tell your poultry friends!
(Adults and youth groups are welcome.)

For questions and to register: contact Jessica Renshaw at (410) 742-1178 or jrenshaw@umd.edu

New Organic Agriculture Web Site

A new web site about U.S. organic agriculture production provides research, news and learning modules from land-grant universities nationwide. eOrganic will launch at regional organic farming and production conferences in January and February. It is one of the many Web communities within eXtension (pronounced E-extension), www.extension.org, a national initiative of the U.S. Cooperative Extension System.

“This new resource is for anyone who wants to learn more about organic agriculture, one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture,” Oregon State University vegetable specialist Alex Stone said. “eOrganic is designed for farmers, ranchers, agricultural professionals, certifiers, researchers and educators seeking science- and experience-based information. Our goal is to be a reliable resource that is responsive to the changing information and

technology needs of the organic industry and community. The site is focused on general organic agriculture, dairy production and vegetable production. We expect to continually expand the information available.” For more information, contact Terry Meisenbach at 760-328-8260.

New University of Maryland Web Site for Rural and Community Development Info

The Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center (MREDC) is now the place for the agricultural and natural resources community to go for valuable information thanks to the creation of a new website: mredc.umd.edu. The website was formally introduced at the Maryland Ag Commission meeting on February 11.

“Agricultural and natural resources businesses and the people who run them are facing challenges today involving finances, changing land use patterns, government regulations and more,” says Dr. Nick Place, associate AGNR dean and associate director of the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension (MCE). “The college and MCE are dedicated to helping agricultural and natural resources enterprises prosper, and we anticipate that the MREDC will be a keystone in the college’s Economic and Community Development Initiative and will serve as a model for similar efforts elsewhere. The launching of the website is just the first step.

The website contains podcasts, video presentations, webinars and other resources, including regional contacts and supporting agencies that will enable extension faculty to expand their programming resources. “Our hope is that our faculty will contribute their expertise, publicize events, post interactive presentations, and otherwise use this website to assist their clients with such issues as entrepreneurship, business development, alternative enterprises, intergenerational transfer of businesses,” says regional Extension specialist Ginger Myers.

For more information, contact: Ginger Myers at 301-432-2767.

USDA Farm Bill Programs
 by **Jim Myers, USDA-NRCS**
District Conservationist
Howard SCD

Howard County producers are advised that the 2008 Farm Bill continues two very popular USDA conservation programs. These are the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). Both of these programs are administered through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in partnership locally with the Howard Soil Conservation District (HSCD).

EQIP is the main cost share program of the federal government that provides funding for a variety of practices that impact water quality and erosion control on farms and ranches. The traditional practices include agricultural waste storage structures, heavy use area protection, roof runoff controls around barnyards, grassed waterways, diversions, terraces, and other erosion control practices. Some other practices that are promoted with EQIP are grazing practices, pest management, nutrient management, and improvements to irrigation systems. Many of these practices include multi-year incentives to help producers improve their methods of management and reduce negative effects on the environment.

WHIP is a program which provides payments towards the eligible costs associated with such wildlife-enhancing practices as filter strips, riparian forest buffers, and conservation cover. Other practices that are needed to implement the wildlife practice are also cost shared. These other practices may include fence, water troughs, or stream crossings, for instance, if the filter strip or riparian buffer involves an animal pasture situation where the animals need access to water after getting fenced away from the stream. There is a requirement that at least one acre of land is involved with any WHIP plan.

Each of these programs requires a contractual agreement between the landowner or farm operator and USDA. The time frame for the agreements varies with the program. The first step is to work with the local office to develop or update the soil and water conservation plan for your farm. The plan inventories the current natural resources on the property, identifies any erosion or water quality problems, and offers

solutions to those problems in the form of conservation practices. These are also known as best management practices or BMPs. Any proposed cost shared practices will be part of this plan.

Most practices in these programs are cost shared at 75% of the average or expected costs. These cost figures are determined through a statewide or regional assessment of costs.

Anyone interested in these programs must update records with the Farm Services Agency office in Derwood (301-590-2846). There are certain eligibility issues that their office must complete.

To learn more about these programs, you may contact the Howard Soil Conservation District/NRCS office at 410-489-7987 or visit the office at the shopping center at 708 Lisbon Center Drive in Woodbine. You may also access information about these programs at the Maryland NRCS website at www.md.nrcs.usda.gov.

The Many Benefits of Switchgrass
 by **Jim Myers, USDA-NRCS**
District Conservationist
Howard SCD

There has been a lot of interest during recent years in growing warm season grasses for use as an alternative fuel. Warm season grasses could be used for their biomass (stalk) as a source of ethanol. The main warm season grass that has sparked interest for use as an alternative fuel source is switchgrass.

There are many benefits for using warm season grasses, especially switchgrass, as a fuel source. First, it is a RENEWABLE energy source that is said to produce 8,000 BTUs per pound, an amount similar to low quality coal. What's more, it provides this energy without the need for as many pesticides and fertilizers as other ethanol sources such as corn. Warm season grasses are unique in that they flourish in soils that are low in fertility and pH. This means that fewer trips across a field are needed when growing switchgrass (a further fuel savings). And they remove thousands of pounds of greenhouse gases (Carbon) from the atmosphere, just by growing and storing this carbon as organic

matter in their root systems as well as in the above ground stalk.

In addition to its fuel use, switchgrass provides other benefits for the environment and in agricultural production. These include grazing for livestock, erosion control, and wildlife cover.

For grazing, the grass is primarily suited for cattle forage. The nature of the switchgrass plant dictates this use as it is a coarse-leaved plant that horses will reject. Furthermore, it survives best when not grazed below 6 inches. Thus, if the grass is grazed by sheep, it will be difficult to manage as sheep like to graze forage close to the ground. Switchgrass growth occurs through the hot summer months, so when traditional cool season grasses go dormant, it will provide forage. This "extension" of the grazing season is ideal for beef operations relying more on grass and can reduce costs for these farmers since less baled hay will be needed for summer feeding and thus can be saved for winter feeding.

Switchgrass is an excellent ground cover for erosion control. It is a bunchgrass that has rhizomes which help it to spread. The root system also is very deep, giving a better capacity to hold soil in place. The deep roots give the plant drought tolerance since more water can be obtained, further enhancing its ability to maintain cover on the ground. Since it thrives in lower fertility soils, it can provide cover where traditional cool season grasses may be unable to establish. Switchgrass has been used very successfully in the rehabilitation of strip mines.

Switchgrass gives excellent wildlife cover. Since it grows as a bunchgrass, smaller animals can move through the switchgrass stand to escape predators. Switchgrass is one of many warm season grasses that have been used for years as a component in wildlife cover programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program and other government and private programs that promote wildlife habitat improvements. These private programs include work done by such groups as Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited.

Like most grasses, there are switchgrass varieties that have been selected for specific traits. There are switchgrass cultivars which provide excellent wildlife cover due to their standability, for example. There are varieties

that have been selected for their grazing attributes. These varieties have more tillers and leaf area as compared to others.

One disadvantage of growing switchgrass is that it takes several years to establish in most cases. Germination is slow requiring that the seeds go through a natural scarifying process before they can germinate. This process occurs naturally through normal freezing and thawing action or through biological activity on the seed. One must be patient while establishing this grass and wait two or three years after planting before making a decision on stand success.

As progress is made towards using warm season grasses for biofuel and it becomes more economical, switchgrass and its warm season cousins are bound to become a more common part of our landscape. It is expected that the impact of these grasses will benefit the environment in more ways than simply just reducing fossil fuel use.

Inheritances

by **Timothy S. Barkley, Sr.**
JD, CFP, CSA, Attorney at Law

Many of this writer's clients emphasize that they don't want arguments among their loved ones after their passing. But, "you don't know your family until you've shared an inheritance with them." While money itself may be neutral, the love thereof is destructive, both to the person so afflicted and to those around him or her. It can even destroy your estate plan.

Be honest with yourself when planning your estate. If your loved ones, or some of them, are afflicted with the love of lucre, plan carefully to reduce or eliminate incentives and opportunities to dominate others for gain. Lifetime patterns of dominance and submission between children often simply continue or are exacerbated in your estate administration after your death, but can be ameliorated by careful forethought.

First, carefully select your fiduciaries – executor, agent under power of attorney, trustee. Make sure that he or she is able to resist the temptation for personal gain at the expense of your beneficiaries, and to withstand the intensity of impecunious or acquisitive demands from your loved ones.

If no one in your family can fill the bill, consider a professional or corporate executor or trustee. Companies such as banks and trust companies, and local professionals such as accountants and attorneys can provide fiduciary services for a fee. Make sure your professional or corporate fiduciary will be attentive to your family. If your estate is large or complex, you might have to weigh the greater capability of a large but distant corporate fiduciary against the greater attentiveness of a local professional fiduciary.

A trustee committee, consisting of a family member and a professional or corporate fiduciary, can provide some of that balance. The family member, knowing the needs and personalities involved, can provide insights easily overlooked by a corporate fiduciary, while the professional or corporate fiduciary often supplies more consistent administration and a "relief valve" for the family fiduciary besought by beneficiaries.

The selection of your fiduciary, while often simple, sometimes requires great forethought and planning.

Second, think through your distribution carefully. "All to my children in equal shares" sounds simple, but masks the necessity of appraising and distributing your tangible personal property – your "stuff" – based on dollar value. A better formulation might take into account past promises and known proclivities to distribute items based on a distribution list or at the discretion of a trusted executor. Remaining assets can then be divided as you have determined.

The requirement that your executor "sell all my assets and distribute the proceeds" can eliminate arguments about who gets what, but can also simply postpone the argument to the date of the auction, as children are forced to bid against each other for what they want.

There is simply no substitute for thinking things through for yourself.

Third, be sure your will or trust is out of reach of your beneficiaries. Storing the document in the house or other known, accessible location gives an unscrupulous child the ability to change your carefully laid plans by "losing" the will or trust.

You can deposit your will (but not a living trust)

for safekeeping with the Register of Wills of the county in which you reside. The cost is only five dollars, and only you can withdraw your will from their vault. You receive the satisfaction of knowing that this documentation of your wishes is physically safe from the vagaries of life such as house fires, and also protected from those who would alter your intentions for their own advantage.

Some attorneys will retain your documents for you. While this is initially attractive, if that attorney goes out of business, your documents can be lost. This writer is the custodian of original wills from one such local attorney, and it has proven difficult to locate many of the clients of that attorney in order to make other arrangements.

Think through or rethink your estate plan and be sure you have taken steps to plan realistically for your family situation and eliminate points of contention when possible.

The War Years - German POWs
Help with the Harvest on Many
Howard County Farms
by Allan Bandel

During World War II, when many local men were away from home serving in the military, there were some severe labor shortages on farms, not just here in Maryland, but all across the U.S. This was especially true during the harvest season. Because there were inadequate facilities in Europe to house all of the POWs captured by the Allies, many German and Italian war prisoners were brought to this country. Many were "farmed out" on a daily basis to local farmers to help alleviate the severe war-time manpower shortage.

In Maryland, one of the U.S.'s major centers for housing German war prisoners was the U.S. Army's Fort George G. Meade Reservation in nearby Odenton, just over the line in Anne Arundel County. As a kid, one of my more vivid memories of the World War II years was that of being around some of the German POW's as they worked on our farm helping with some of the crop harvesting. These experiences usually took the form of hand cutting and loading corn at silo filling time, or later, cutting, shocking and husking ear corn in the field.

In order to take advantage of this labor assistance, my dad, like many other neighboring farmers, placed his request for POWs, usually for just one or two men at a time, through the County Cooperative Extension Service office in Ellicott City. The prisoners assigned to work on farms in Howard County were picked up each day at their Fort Meade barracks by one of Mr. Ross Hooper's big orange *Mack* school buses driven either by Mr. Hooper himself or by one of his drivers, often his neighbor, Mr. Everett McIntyre.

Occasionally, my brother and I accompanied our dad when he drove the car or the truck down Triadelphia Road to U.S. Rt. 40 (now MD 144) where we would await the arrival of Mr. Hooper's bus. There would often be other farmers waiting there with us on the corner where Olson's Store and Garage were located. For many years, this place was known as the 17 Mile House, later as Adam's Store and Garage, then even later as Gearhart's Store, etc.

The POW bus, heading west on Rt. 40, would pull off on the shoulder of the road as it crested the top of the hill. We would collect our POW(s), put them to work for the day, then return them in the evening to the bus stop for their return trip to Fort Meade. The prisoners usually brought their own modest bag lunches with them. Although they were not supposed to do it, Mother and Grandmother Bandel usually fixed the prisoners a little something more for lunch, especially if they worked hard.

Upon its arrival in the morning, the first person off the bus was usually an armed guard, a Military Policeman (MP), followed by the group of war prisoners (POW's) who were assigned to work on farms from the Triadelphia Road stop. The prisoners were all dressed the same in blue denim shirt and pants with the word "PRISONER" stenciled across the back of their shirt. On their trousers was stenciled a large black letter "W" on one leg and a large black letter "P" on the other. The highly visible letters prominently identified these men as "War Prisoners".

For their weapon, most guards carried a 12 gauge shotgun and a sidearm. Being just a young boy at the time, I was thoroughly impressed with how dangerous these prisoners must obviously be. I was disappointed that a military guard did not accompany "our" prisoner.

But, in reality, a personal guard for every prisoner was not practical. If there were no more than one or two prisoners assigned to a given farm, no guard bothered to come with them. If there were a group of ten or twelve prisoners perhaps, all going to one location, then one of the armed MP's would accompany them.

I seriously doubt that there was ever much real danger that any of these German POW's would be foolish enough, or even entertained thoughts of staging an escape attempt. For one thing, where would they go after "escaping"? It was a long grueling journey back across the ocean to Germany (assuming they could find a ride). It was reported that of the more than 425,000 German POWs brought to this country, only about 2,000 of them ever tried to escape. Ultimately, all but just a few of the "escapees" voluntarily found their own way back to their camps.

Another reason why there was so little danger of violence from these prisoners was that for the most part, these guys were fairly happy, or relieved, to be here. They had been in the war and had experienced the battlefields. They knew what it was like to see their homes, their families, and their country destroyed. They knew that Germany was losing the war. And for them at least, the war was now over. They were in a safe place, far away from the combat zone. They had a good roof over their heads every night, a warm dry bed to sleep in, clean clothes on their backs, and three square meals guaranteed to them every day. And because of the Geneva Convention, they were being paid – not much perhaps, but certainly more than if they were sitting around idly at the camp. They also suspected that had they not been taken prisoner by Allied forces when they were, there was a reasonably good chance that they might not have lived to see this day.

On most occasions, Dad had need for only one, or possibly two, prisoners at a time. There was at least one occasion though, in which he needed more help. He had cut down several acres of corn, a whole field of it, with his corn binder. The heavy bundles of still-to-be-husked corn were lying randomly scattered all over the field. He needed the extra help to gather up the bundles, set them upright and tie them securely into shocks. On that special occasion, he requested and received about a half dozen prisoners. An armed guard came with them this time.

The corn field that he needed help with was in an isolated location on a rented neighboring farm. This field was on the far side of a woods, so it was necessary to park the truck on which we hauled the prisoners. The farm truck, being too big to fit between the trees, had to be left at the edge of the woods. As a group, the men had to march along a steep path, through the woods and then finally across a small stream. Because of the thick woods, the steep banks of the stream, and further complicated by some ditches across the steeply sloping access road, it was a difficult field to approach with vehicles, sometimes even with farm equipment. So, the harvest crew had to walk the final quarter mile.

Parking our farm truck at the edge of the woods, the military guard instructed Dad to proceed first, leading the way through the dense woods. Dad's position in the procession was in front of the prisoners. Next came the half dozen prisoners, laughing and joking among themselves as they marched along. Finally, bringing up the rear at the end of the column, where he could keep a "sharp" eye on his charges, came the military guard. Fortunately, the POWs were a friendly, contented bunch and there was never any problem.

Even though the prisoners were provided with a basic lunch, Mother remembered fixing additional food and cold drinks, probably iced tea, which she carried to them in the middle of the day. At the end of the workday after the prisoners had returned through the woods and were back on the truck for their ride to meet the bus back to Fort Meade, the guard confided to Dad that he was sure glad that there had been no trouble because if there had been, he wasn't even sure if he knew how to properly load and fire his weapon.

Dad was convinced that the German prisoners who were released to work on U.S. farms had been very well screened beforehand. Had they been considered dangerous, either physically or politically, they would never have been allowed outside of the secure POW enclosure at Fort Meade.

As mentioned previously, on those occasions when we needed only one or two prisoners, we did not rate a guard. Being a young pre-teenage kid then who had lived with the War almost his entire life and who had heard essentially nothing good about the Axis powers and the German

soldiers who were ordered to carry out Hitler's and Mussolini's cruel wishes, my eight-year-old mind thought that this lenient guard policy was extremely risky. But again, as mentioned before, there was very little danger because these prisoners for the most part were just happy to be off of the World War II battlefield, out of the war and far away from the shooting.

After so many years, I can recall the last name of only one of our POW helpers. It was either Miller, or possibly Mueller. Of course, Herr Miller's grasp of the English language was essentially nil. So it was a problem much of the time for us to communicate with him. We were luckier than most farm families though, since Grandmother Bandel grew up in a German speaking household and could still speak passable German. She therefore became our indispensable German translator. Herr Miller was a friendly enough type of person, hard working, and very much concerned for the safety of his family back home in Germany.

Although he was not supposed to be allowed into the house, at meal time, he and my grandmother often carried on long friendly conversations. Prisoners carried their own lunches, usually peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. But I am certain that my grandmother occasionally slipped him some extra food off of her table. We never heard from Herr Miller again after the war. But some Maryland farm families had the same German prisoners assigned to them so often that strong lasting friendships were established. Some U.S. and German families actually visited back and forth between Germany and the U.S. after the war.

As young kids, my brother Donny and I were impressed and completely intrigued by our grandmother's ability to understand and speak the German language. The occasions in which she used it in our presence, unfortunately, were infrequent, and usually occurred only after a lot of pleading with her on our part. She would just never take very seriously our requests that she attempt to teach us the language. About as far as she would go was to show us how to say "thank you" in German, and to count from one to twenty. Even those few words, without a regular need for them, have now largely been forgotten.

I believe that there was a simple reason for my grandmother's reluctance to speak in German around us. There was probably a certain amount

of shame at the time carried by many German immigrants. This guilt was likely associated with the historically aggressive, often cruel war-like behavior exhibited by their former homeland. Now Germany was again showing the world how aggressive they could be as World War II raged. As Allied troops advanced against the Germans across Europe, reports began to emerge of atrocities committed by Hitler's "chosen race" against other ethnic groups, especially the Jews. These German immigrants, like Grandmother Bandel's parents, had left Germany for a new life. They no longer wanted to be considered Germans.

They were now American citizens and they did not want to be reminded of or in any way associated with any of these horrible cruel atrocities. Therefore, as quickly as they could, they learned to understand and speak English. They even refrained from speaking German in the privacy of their own homes and they discouraged their children from using the German language.

In our immediate family, my grandparents insisted on communicating in English. As a kid growing up, Dad never learned to speak or to write in German – nor did his two older siblings. Thinking back now though, what a wonderful natural opportunity my brother and I missed for learning the German language.

I suspect that had I been exposed to the German language more as a kid, immersed in a natural setting, it would have been much easier when, some twenty years later, I was required to study the language intensively in order to pass a required German reading examination, one of the University of Maryland's two foreign language requirements that was a formidable "hurdle" for most Ph.D. candidates.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2009

- Mar 3 **Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting.** 7:00 to 9:00 pm Glenwood Community Center. For information, call: (410) 489-7987.
- Mar 4 **Private Pesticide Applicator Training.** 10:00 am to noon. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD.

For Information, call (301) 600-3576.

- Mar 4 **Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification.** 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Mar 5 **Advanced IPM Conference.** Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD. Designed especially for Nursery, Greenhouse and Landscape Managers. 8:15 am to 4:30 pm. For more information, call 301-596-9413.
- Mar 5 **Central Maryland Women in Agriculture Conference.** 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD. Contact: Kathy Zimmerman at 410-313-6500.
- Mar 5-
Apr 16 **Beginning a Small Farm - Part I.** Short Course (6 classes). 7 pm to 9 pm. (Howard County). Contact: Terry Poole at 301-600-3577.
- Mar 6&7 **Joint Maryland Cattlemen's Convention/Central Maryland Hay & Pasture Conference.** Hagerstown Hotel and Convention Center, Hagerstown, MD. For information, call: 410-795-5309, or e-mail sbarao@marylandcattle.org.
- Mar 11 **Private Pesticide Applicator Exam.** 10:00 am. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Mar 11 **Food Processing for Profit: Moving from Concept to Consumers.** 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Friendly Farm Restaurant, Upperco, MD. Contact: Ginger Myers at 301-432-2767. See article elsewhere in this newsletter for details.
- Mar 12 **Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.** 8:00 to 9:00 am. Dining Hall, Howard County Fairgrounds. West Friendship, MD.
- Mar 12 **Outlook & Policy Conference 2009.** Center for Agricultural and Natural Resource Policy, Annapolis, MD. For

information, contact Howard County Extension Office at 410-313-2707.

- Mar 16 **Field Crops and Pasture IPM Workshop.** 6:00 to 9:00 pm. Davidsonville Family Recreation Center, Davidsonville, MD. To register, Call: 410-222-6759.
- Mar 18 **Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training & Recertification.** 10:00 am to noon or 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Mar 21 **Howard County – Iron Bridge Race Meet.** Pleasant Prospect Farm, 4389 Jennings Chapel Road, Brookeville, Maryland 20833. For more information and photos of prior race meets, please visit our website at www.hcibhounds.com.
- Mar 25 **Certified Consultants/Farmers Recertification.** 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Mar 28 **Small Flock Poultry Workshop.** Carroll Community College, Rooms 154 - 157, Westminster, MD. Contact: Jessica Renshaw at 410-742-1178 or jtrenshaw@umd.edu.
- Mar 30 **Advanced Agronomics Workshops: I. Herbicide Technology.** 6:00 to 9:00 pm, Anne Arundel County Extension Office, Glen Burnie, MD. For information, or to register, contact: Dave Myers, Anne Arundel Extension Office, at 410-222-6759.
- Apr 1-
May 6 **Beginning a Small Farm - Part II.** Short Course (6 classes). 7 pm to 9 pm. Contact: Terry Poole at 301-600-3577.
- Apr 8 &
Apr 16 **Tentative. Invasive Species Training Sessions.** Geared toward Arborists and Landscape Managers. Lisbon Fire Hall, Lisbon, MD. Contact: Stanton Gill at 410-868-9400 or 301-596-9413.

- Apr 18 **14th Annual Consignment Sale.** Howard County Antique Farm Machinery Club. Benefit Howard County's Living Farm Heritage Museum. 9:00 am. Howard County Fairgrounds. West Friendship, MD. Contact: John Frank, 410-531-2569.
- Apr 23 **Howard County Farm Bureau Legislative Dinner.** 7:00 pm. Lisbon Volunteer Fire Department Social Hall, Lisbon, MD.
- Apr 28-
May 12 **Basics of Forestry Short Course** (3 classes). 6 pm to 9 pm. Contact: Terry Poole at 301-600-3577.
- May 9 **Spring Plowing Field Day and Demonstration.** Howard County Antique Farm Machinery Club and the Maryland Draft Horse and Mule Association. Land preparation for corn planting. Living Farm Heritage Museum Grounds (Across MD 144 from the Howard County Fairgrounds. West Friendship, MD. (Rain date – May 16).
- May 14 **Howard County Agri-Business Breakfast.** 8:00 to 9:00 am. Dining Hall, Howard County Fairgrounds. West Friendship, MD.
- May 30 **Maryland National Road Yard Sale.** An 824-mile-long yard sale – from Baltimore to St. Louis, Missouri. Living Farm Heritage Museum, West Friendship, MD.
- Aug 8-15 **64th Annual Howard County Fair.** Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD.
- Sep 7-
Oct 7 **Beginning a Successful Small Farm, Part I** Short Course. (6 classes). 7:00 pm to 9 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.
- Oct 11 **23rd Annual Maryland Horsemen's Party.** 2:00 to 5:00 pm, Ten Oaks Ballroom, Clarksville, MD. Contact: Kristen Wilson at 301-596-9478.
- Oct 19-
Nov 6 **Nutrient Management Farmer Training Certification.** (7 classes) 7:00

pm to 9:00 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.

Nov 4 **Private Pesticide Applicator Training.** 10:00 am to noon. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.

Nov 4 **Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification.** 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.

Nov 12 **Private Pesticide Applicator Exam.** 10:00 am. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.

Oct 27 **Nutrient Applicator Voucher Training & Recertification.** 10:00 am to noon or 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Frederick County Cooperative Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD. For Information, call (301) 600-3576.

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[NOTE]: Some programs require pre-registration and/or a fee. For programs sponsored by Maryland Cooperative Extension, if you need special assistance to participate, please contact the person indicated at least two weeks in advance of the event.

Something to Think About More of Churchill's Legacy

In the January, 2009 issue of this newsletter, some rather clever quotes (at least in my opinion) were presented that have been

attributed to Sir Winston Churchill, that great English Statesman who served his country so well, especially during the stressful years of World War II. He, and some of his fabled contemporaries, were well known for their skill at using words with a high degree of ingenuity and eloquence; unfortunately, far more so perhaps than what we are used to hearing today.

After reading about those witty exchanges between Churchill and Lady Astor, etc., one reader advised me of another story that was allegedly attributed to Churchill, and supposedly true. The situation this time concerned how Churchill chose his final resting place.

On a visit to the UK several years ago, Marilyn and I were privileged to visit that really out-of-the-way, somewhat difficult to find, and definitely obscure grave site (unless you happen to have a good guide, as we did of course, or are thoroughly familiar with the back roads of the English countryside).

It was said that although Churchill was offered many famous sites for his final resting place, such as Westminster Abbey, for instance (the burial place of kings), or St Paul's Cathedral, designed by Sir Christopher Wren. He chose instead to be buried in the little churchyard at St. Martin's Church, Bladon, Oxfordshire, which is near Blenheim Palace (Churchill's birthplace) and is also the relatively modest familial burial ground of the Churchills.

Aside from it already being his family's historic burial ground, why did he choose this relatively obscure site? Visitors must approach it almost in single file because of the constricted alleys and narrow graveyard pathways leading to it. Legend has it that Sir Winston's most important reasoning was that since he had 'never let anyone walk all over him in life, he certainly wasn't going to let anyone walk all over him in death' (as they might well do literally if his remains were placed in a crypt beneath the cold stone floors of one of those much more famous locations).