

Friends of



The Agricultural History Farm Park, Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Maurice Ward



Dear Friends: Since we last spoke, it seems as if our world has been turned upside down. As commerce, daily activities, planned events, personal and family plans are either disrupted, cancelled, or put on indefinite hold, we continue to navigate uncertain times as coronavirus concerns continue to dominate our lives.

Regrettably, these changes have profoundly affected our program plans as well. The Friends of the Farm Board of Directors has voted to cancel all remaining sponsored Friends events for the remainder of the calendar year. We would encourage all members to check the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning official website (MNCPP) for any updates, revisions or explanations of further programming. Accordingly, this will be our last newsletter for the year 2020. Be sure to check the Friends website over the coming months in case we are able to host or join a small event at the farm later this fall.

It is hard to find positives in times such as these, but perhaps the pandemic has focused us on issues pertaining to the agricultural community: the ability to get food, fuel and fiber safely and efficiently to our nation's supermarkets and ultimately to our tables. We thank all those who make this happen every day.....and on behalf of all our officers and directors, please be well and safe.

Membership Dues and News – by Susan Morris

Thank you to Katherine Sheram and David Giovannoni and Barbara Spitzer for their memorial donations honoring the late Laura Ann Whirley. We appreciate your generosity.

Congratulations to our New Life Member! Bruce Cohen became our 64th life member this spring. Thank you for your support, Bruce!

Welcome, New Members! We welcome **Nina Eldred, Jurg Hochuli, Josie Farrell, and Tim Daly** to the Friends of the Agricultural History Farm Park this year.

Fond Farewell ~ We bid a fond farewell to **Doris E. Day** who moved to Biloxi, MS and sent her best regards.

In order to continue to receive the newsletter, please check your mailing label. If you don't see 20 or LIFE on your label, your 2020 dues haven't yet been submitted. The 2020 Membership Application form was enclosed in the March newsletter. Complete and mail your membership application and check (payable to Friends of the Agricultural History Farm Park, Inc.) to: Treasurer, P.O. Box 5810, Derwood, MD 20855. You may also pay your dues using PayPal: contribute@friendsofthefarmpark.org.

IMPORTANT: please include your Email Address, if available. We will never share your email addresses with outside groups but we do need to quickly communicate with our Friends, upon occasion. Also, please note any additions or corrections to your contact information.

As Laura Ann Whirley once wrote, "Thanks for keeping our P.O. Box fat and happy with your dues!" We do appreciate our Friends members! **Questions?** Contact Susan Morris (skmorris1@verizon.net).

The Friends Corner – by Susan Morris

Condolences to the family of **Robert Milton Hanson** who died on August 16, 2019. After his family moved to Mt Prospect Farm, near Gaithersburg, Bob joined the local 4-H club and raised Berkshire hogs and Black Angus cattle. He later became a 4-H Club Leader and, with 15 others, served on the organizing committee that helped form the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair in 1945. After retiring, Bob remained active in farming in Montgomery County, cultivating hundreds of acres and breeding cattle and hogs. He was active with numerous community and civic entities over the years. Bob's interest in showing and touring antique automobiles was shared with his older brother, Bill. Bob accumulated a stable of vehicles, including a 1915 Ford Model T, a 1940 Ford wooden station wagon, a 1971 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow sedan and a 1938 Lincoln limousine.

We join our President, Maurice Ward, and family in mourning the death of his mother, **Betty Ward**, 97, who passed away peacefully on March 9, 2020. Betty worked as the supervisor of Home Instruction for Montgomery County Public Schools for over 20 years. Maurice shared that his mother even taught Basil Waters, brother of the late Laura Ann Whirley! In her early career, Mrs. Ward was a French and English public school teacher. She did all this while raising her family and running a 32 acre sweet corn/vegetable farm in Darnestown MD, with her husband, Maurice Ward, who was also a Montgomery County Public School administrator.

Sixteen individuals will be inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame during a special ceremony to be held on Friday, October 2, 2020 at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center in Chevy Chase, MD. The National 4-H Hall of Fame Class of 2020 Laureates, who will be honored for excellence in citizenship, leadership, character and career accomplishments, includes our Friends newsletter editor, **Kendra Wells**. Kendra started her Extension career as a Montgomery County 4-H Educator. Her work and dedication led to the Maryland 4-H state office where she served as the Extension Specialist for Youth Development. We are proud of Kendra's mission to help youth "Make the Best Better!" Congratulations!

Contact Susan Morris (skmorris1@verizon.net) if you have items for future issues of the FAHFP Friends Corner.

2020 Montgomery County Agricultural Fair - Cancellation

Message from the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair Board:

In order to protect our volunteers, our exhibitors, the citizens of our community, and those who work at the Fair in a variety of different jobs, the Board of Directors has made the difficult decision to cancel the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair that was scheduled to occur from August 14-22, 2020. We encourage you to visit our web site at mcagfair.com for updates and a return to the "9 Best Days of Summer" next year, "Family Fun for Everyone", August 13-21, 2021. Those who have purchased tickets will have the option to receive a refund or keep your tickets for use in 2021. Contact us at vward@mcagfair.com if you would like a refund or have a question.

PLEASE NOTE

Our next newsletter will be published in 2021. Please visit our website for information and updates!

FAHFP Website—<https://friendsofthefarmpark.org>

Friends of the Agricultural History Farm Park, Inc.

President: Maurice Ward; Vice President: Chris Suzich; Secretary: Linda Lewis; Treasurer: Cindy Biery

Board Members: John Hench, Deborah Lee, Jeanne Phillips, Howard Williams

Director: Robert Lee "Bobby" Allnutt

Committee Members: Howard Williams, Joe Ginther, Bert Bleckwenn, and Todd Carter.



The "Whatsit" for this newsletter: A black walnut cracker.

This black walnut cracker was donated to the Granary by Howard and Christina Williams of Poolesville.

Black walnuts are notorious for being hard to crack. First you have to peel off the outer hull. This is where you need to wear gloves, or your hands will be covered with walnut die that takes weeks to wash off. No regular nut cracker will crack a black walnut. In the old days we would resort to putting the hulled walnuts on a sidewalk and smashing them with a hammer. The problem was that the walnut shells would fly everywhere and much of the nut meat was crushed. On top of that your sidewalk would have black stains for a long period of time. The solution is the "Whatsit". Pressure is ratcheted up with the lever until the black walnut is cracked.

Here's a tip I received from a local farmer on how to remove the black walnut hulls. First you park your pickup truck on a hard surface. Then you lay the walnuts out in a single layer in front of both front tires. then you drive over them. This will bust up the hulls but won't crack the black walnuts.

More Granary Additions!

WOODEN OXEN YOKE. This had been in storage in the Newman Building. We are not sure of the age of this yoke nor do we know who donated it. The plan is to hang this in the Granary on the post behind the front desk. When visitors come in the door this will be the first thing they see.



BLOCK ICE TONGS. These were used to move large blocks of ice that were used to cool ice boxes before the advent of electric refrigerators. Large blocks of ice were also used on local dairy farms to keep milk cool until it was shipped out. We are not sure of the age of the tongs nor do we know who donated them. These tongs had been in storage in the Newman buildings. There used to be an ice business in Darnestown at the intersection of Seneca Road and Esworthy Road. It was owned and operated by the Foster Family. Part of the cinder block ice facility is still standing on Esworthy Road. At one time Esworthy Road was known as "Ice House Road".

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Please advise of any
incorrect names, spelling or address
and report damaged mailings by
calling the VOICEMAIL line -
301-670-4661

Over the years a number of visitors to the Agricultural History Farm Park have asked us about the tall stately coniferous tree on the west (or left) side of the farmhouse.



This particular tree is a Nordmann fir, *Abies nordmanniana**. The species is native to the mountainous regions south and east of the Black Sea in Turkey, Georgia, and the Russian Caucasus. The current distribution of Nordmann fir is associated with the forest refuges (*refugia*) that existed during the Ice Age along the eastern and southern Black Sea Coast.

The Nordmann fir is one of the tallest trees in the forests in this region and can grow to heights of near 300 feet, with a trunk diameter approaching seven feet. It typically grows at elevations of 3000 – 8000 feet (below the timberline) in subalpine forests on mountains with an average annual precipitation of around 40 inches.

The Nordmann fir is often grown for use as Christmas trees, especially in Europe. It is favored for its attractive foliage, with needles that are not particularly sharp and do not drop readily when the tree dries out. It is also a popular ornamental tree in many parks and large gardens. Given the size of this particular tree, it was likely planted by members of the Bussard family following their renovation of the farmhouse in the early 1900's. And given its age, it has grown to be one of the larger specimens of Nordmann fir known to occur in Montgomery County.

*This particular tree was identified by Phil Normandy, Plant Collections Manager at M-NCPPC, Department of Parks' Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, MD.

Prepared by: John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division, M-NCPPC, Department of Parks – retired.
May 7, 2020.