

Poolesville Pride Club Report 2025

On behalf of the Poolesville Pride Club we'd like to thank the Town of Poolesville, MoCo Pride Center, and the residents and businesses of Poolesville and the Ag Reserve for their support.

1. January 2025: Initiation of monthly Art Social meetups at Locals
 - a. Monthly meetup hosting between 8-24 participants each month
2. May 2025: The Garage local artist festival - booth
3. May 2025: Taste of Riverworks booth
 - a. Shared recent activities with local artists and politicians
4. June 2025: Poolesville Town Pride Month resident testimony before Poolesville Town Commissioners and pride flag displayed on the electronic signboard all month
5. June 2025: Pride Fest 2025 at Locals
 - a. Annual event to celebrate Pride Month, included attendees from County and State representatives, local non-profit leaders, 18 different artists and vendors, sponsorship from Riverworks, and an estimated 3,000 residents throughout the day.
6. MoCo County Pride Celebration - booth
7. September 2025 Poolesville Day participation
 - a. 17 participants in the parade
 - b. We handed out over 500 mini-flags and distributed hundreds of stickers and signed-up dozens of folks to our mailing list.
8. October 2025 WUMCO ScareCrow competition
 - a. 15 participants gathered to create our first place scarecrow art installation - "Pink Bony Club" - we won an award for a half-page Ad in our local paper The Monocacy Monocle
9. October 2025 Rocky Horror Picture Show Screening
 - a. 36 participants gathered at our Old Town Hall for a Rocky Horror Picture Show Screening
10. December 2025 Pride Basket for WUMCO
 - a. Donations and/or purchases from different local queer artists and creators to create a basket to raise money for WUMCO

Appendix



Poolsville Pride Club Booth at The Garage Pride Fest - local youth artist venue - Boyds, MD



Pride Fest 2025

Pride Fest 2025



Pride Fest 2025



Pride Fet 2025 Audience



Drag Story Hour - Pride Fest 2025 - "Bella Naughty"









Pride Fest 2025 - Baby Chicks Station - local farmer Mark Walter



Conversations with Queer Student Union 2024-2025

Letter from QSU to the Town as read by Mehrsa Paksima May 2024 - inspired the pride flag on display on the electronic signboard for the first time in June 2025 :

To the Commissioners of Poolesville,

We are students at Poolesville High School. Some of us are residents of Poolesville, and some of us commute from other parts of the county to PHS every day for school. We love our school and appreciate the teachers, businesses, and community that support us. We are writing to you with a simple request: please wave a Pride flag proudly next to the American flag on Whalen Commons.

Pride flags are a symbol of inclusivity, not only for the Queer community - but for anyone who has ever felt like they weren't part of the majority. A community that advertises its inclusivity not only supports the queer community, but also send a message of welcome to other underrepresented groups. Waving a Pride flag year round is a statement of solidarity - it sends a clear message of

shared values, whereas waving a Pride flag only in the month of June feels like a seasonal decoration or a token gesture to appease the Queer community.

The American flag is an aspirational symbol - from the beginning, when this country was founded, the freedom and rights represented by the American flag only included white, land-owning men. The struggle to help America realize its aspiration of true equity and freedoms is ongoing - and is real and present for the LGBTQIA+ community. All we are fighting for are the basic rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." There are many places in the United States where these basic rights are still denied to Queer kids. Fortunately we don't live somewhere like Florida - instead we live here in Maryland where we generally feel safe...as long as we're quiet and stay somewhat hidden.

When we make ourselves visible - come out to family, friends, our community - we frequently experience subtle forms of violence ranging from family rejection or hateful words from people online who believe our very existence is a threat to their own beliefs to fellow students who refuse to use our pronouns or names or parents who still hope we will become someone different. Safe spaces, like the Queer Student Union (QSU) and Project Uplift, have been a lifeline. Many of us felt alone and isolated in elementary and middle school where there were no gathering spaces for Queer students and a health curriculum that made us feel "othered" rather than "normal." Putting up a Pride Flag in the center of town is like a beacon to every kid who feels alone - it says "we see you, you're not alone, you are part of us."

The act of not putting up a Pride Flag in the center of town does the opposite. It makes Poolesville complicit to the loud and homophobic minority and it plays into stereotypes of rural communities. Our friends from "down county" often tease us about going to school in a "hick town" - but that's not Poolesville at all. Some people think that open communities that embrace queer kids only exist in urban settings - but that has not been our experience. Poolesville has been a very welcoming community. Poolesville's homey nature lends itself to community solidarity. Putting up a Pride flag would send a visible message affirming what we have experienced to be widely held community values of inclusivity and openness.

We know there will always be people opposed to our cause. We anticipate the angry messages from trolls online and are aware of the potential for our Pride flag to be vandalized. Of course this is hurtful - but it's more hurtful when our allies do nothing. We hope you will prioritize our safety and our well-being instead. Raising a flag is a visible act of solidarity that helps us feel safer and more welcome despite the discomfort caused by a hateful minority. We are brave, strong, and resilient - we recreate things and through art reclaim and transform hate and destruction into something beautiful. And we can do this as long as we have adults and safe spaces to get through those hard moments together. As queerkids, we often look at the world from a different perspective. We are asking you to do the same - to see an opportunity to plant seeds of love where there might be hate. And most importantly, to be leaders who stand up for us, by waving the Pride flag, until we are old enough to do the same for those who follow.

Sincerely, The Poolesville High School Queer Student Union

Letter from QSU to Local Businesses composed in 2024 and distributed again in July 2025 when Pride Club presented to the Poolesville Area Chamber of Commerce:

To the Businesses, Churches, and Residents on the Main Street of Poolesville,

We are students at Poolesville High School. Some of us are residents of Poolesville, and some of us commute from other parts of the county to PHS everyday for school. We love our school and appreciate the teachers, businesses, and community that support us. We are writing to you with a simple request: paint a rainbow, hang colorful lights, put up a pride flag, place pride stickers in your front windows or displays - celebrate Pride month with us *and* help us know where the safe spaces are in Poolesville.

Pride gestures are symbols of inclusivity, not only for the queer community - but for anyone who has ever felt like they weren't part of the majority. A community that is safe and inclusive of queer students is also a community that is safe and inclusive for students who are neuro-diverse, disabled, or anyone who sometimes feels like the world wasn't built for them. Consider waving a Pride flag year round as a statement of solidarity - it sends a clear message of shared values.

When we make ourselves visible - come out to family, friends, our community - we frequently experience subtle forms of violence ranging from family rejection or hateful words. Safe spaces, like the Queer Student Union (QSU), Project Uplift, and community spaces that publicly support us - have been a lifeline. Many of us felt alone and isolated in elementary and middle school where there were no gathering spaces for Queer students. Putting up a Pride Flag or a Poolesville Pride Sticker is like a beacon to every kid who feels alone - it says "we see you, you're not alone, you are part of us - and you are welcome here!"

Thank you!!

Poolesville High School Queer Student Union

Taste of Riverworks May 2024

The Monocacy

MONOCLE

Keeping an Eye on Local News

A Monthly Newspaper

July 2024 • Volume XX, Number 5



It was a great day for the Sugarloaf Citizens' Association! See more pics in Family Album on page 2.



WUMCO is preparing a special summer program for those in need. Tidbits on page 8 will explain what it's all about.



From the quite young to adults, Poolesville was enthralled by HGCBT's performance at Whalen Commons. More pictures in Center Stage on page 13.



She is a scouting pioneer. Find out how on page 18.

Commissioners Commemorate Pride Day and Vote on Final Commemorative Flag Policy

By Link Hoewing

At their June 3 regular meeting, the commissioners of the Town of Poolesville invited the public to celebrate Pride Day with them and adopted a proclamation acknowledging the importance of the event. The hearing room was packed with citizens supporting the observance of Pride Day, many of whom also spoke. The commission also once again discussed the commemorative flag policy they have been working on for some weeks. They did not come to a resolution but made some progress in reaching a consensus and agreed to discuss the issue again.

During their second June meeting (June 17), the commissioners had an extended discussion about the commemorative flag policy and voted to adopt an amended version of the policy.

While there was a large gathering of supporters for Pride Day on June 3, at least one local resident spoke out

against focusing on what he called "social issues." He said that "diversity can make the country divided and not united." He urged the commissioners to reconsider their support.

The commissioners also considered the Public Improvements Agreement or PIA for the Donegan property on the corner of Fisher and Wootton Avenues. A PIA is an agreement a developer signs that outlines the various public improvements the company will install on a given property, such as streets, curbs, and sewer and water connections. A developer builds public infrastructure like this and, when the development is completed, turns it over to the town for ongoing maintenance.

According to a summary of the PIA, the development will have thirty-eight townhouses and will be called "Poolesville Crossing." In the vote to

approve the PIA, one commissioner, Jeff Eck, voted against it, saying he did not like the way the townhouses looked in the schematics and drawings.

After the vote, the commissioners returned to a discussion of the Poolesville Pride proclamation and listened to speakers discussing the event and their views about community attitudes towards LGBTQ+ citizens.

Sam Cooper, the head of Poolesville Pride and also the founder of The Well (a space in Poolesville that encourages growth, healing, and reflection), remarked that he had grown up in town and had felt lonely and isolated in some instances as he was growing up. He asked how many in the audience are LGBTQ+ or love someone who is, and a large share of those in attendance raised their hands. He

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Celebrating the 75th Montgomery County Agricultural Fair and Charles Linthicum, the Last Man Standing

By Rande Davis

As the county gears up to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair, the *Monocle* gives tribute to Charles Linthicum. At ninety-nine years old, he is the last man standing from the original Montgomery County Agricultural Center Board.

Coming from a long line of family dairy farmers, Charles was the youngest member of the original board headed by legendary farmers, J.M. Barnsley, George Lechluder, and Roscoe Whipp. Sitting with Charles on the front porch of his home, overlooking acres of farmland with some beef cattle in the background, it was easy to understand his love of farming, the land, and the family-oriented lifestyle of being a farmer.

He fondly recalls those days of the hard work of endless chores, starting with milking the cows, cleaning the barns, and planting crops in between. At the time, he had a herd of sixty-four cows that had to be attended to twice a day, every day. He fondly remembers being helped by his mother's domestic helper with those milking chores. Not surprisingly, the highlight of every day was the lunch break, a meal lovingly prepared by his mother first, and then his wife. Farms succeed by a robust distribution of duties among family members.

The origins of today's grand week-long fair, the largest single event in the county, began modestly in Rockville on February 16, 1945, when World War II looked to be on the verge of ending. A group of thirteen 4-H



Tom and Charles Linthicum.

members and ag leaders met to plan a 4-H livestock show with classes in home economics included. The startup group was led by just six men: Robert

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Commissioners Commemorate Pride Day and Vote on Final Commemorative Flag Policy

acknowledged the support of the town for the planned Pride Day event and also said he did see it as a sign of growing inclusiveness.

One speaker said that there is still a "large psychological aspect of growing up here, and I only had one teacher I could talk to who understood me."

The final speaker said that "no one wants to be marginalized or tolerated just because of who we are. We'll always be here, and we are part of the fabric of our community." The speaker concluded, "Pride matters because we matter."

One of the student leaders for the Queer Student Union at Poolesville High School, Mehrsa Paksima, read remarks the students had prepared. She urged the town to fly a pride flag on Whalen Commons. She said, "The flag says, 'We see you, you matter, you are part of us.'" She went on, "It shows we have value and demonstrates inclusiveness. It is a visual example that helps make us feel safer."

Commissioner Martin Radigan suggested one option might be to fly the "All Are Welcome Here" flags that have been used by many groups to demonstrate inclusiveness. After some discussion, though, it became clear that many felt that flying one flag like this that is not very specific is not a strong enough statement of support.

Commission President Jim Brown said he did not see the commissioners operating out of a sense of fear but rather wanting to be prudent and careful. He acknowledged that the town did want to avoid unnecessary legal entanglements but that is their responsibility as commissioners.

Virtually the entire commission meeting on June 17 was devoted to discussing and, in the end, adopting a final version of the commemorative flag policy. The discussion centered on a few key issues, including the question of how to adopt a policy that is as carefully framed as possible to protect the town from lawsuits.

Another issue that drew attention was how to come up with a list of commemorative flags that would be displayed each year.

Finally, the question of where to fly approved flags—on the existing town flag poles, on the soon-to-be-completed electric display board on Whalen Commons, or at some other location on town property (e.g., the park where the community center is likely to be located)—was also a significant sticking point.

Brown said that the key questions the commissioners needed to address are: where and when displays of flags will be authorized by the town; the adoption of a list of approved commemorative events or holidays by the commissioners; and whether or not individuals can ask that a holiday be honored by flying a commemorative flag on public property. He went on to note that the draft policy only allows a commissioner to propose that a commemorative flag be flown. Citizens cannot make such a proposal to the town.

Radigan said he does not want to see "open season" on the flying of commemorative flags by the town. He said he likes the approved list of events that would merit the flying of flags because it is "open and shut" and controls how and when flags will be flown.

A concern was raised that the draft policy included language covering "unscheduled events" suggesting that a process would be included to allow new events or holidays to be included. All commissioners seemed to agree this language was too permissive and decided to leave it out of the final policy.

Eck remained concerned that the policy needed to be strong so it "boxed in" the commission from too easily making changes. He said he thought that was in the spirit of what the town attorney, Jay Gullo, had recommended.

In the end, the commissioners amended the policy to remove language about "unscheduled events," kept the requirement in the draft that commissioners be guided by the list from the Library of Congress, and deferred on deciding whether to allow flags to be flown on public flagpoles. Until that issue is decided, flags will be electronically displayed on the town's sign board.

Eck was the only "no" vote. He said it was not a vote against the policy but rather a vote not to move forward until the town attorney had given his final signoff.

Fun Fact...

[wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag)

While the exact origin of the word "flag" is unknown, it first appears in English in the late fifteenth century. Possible origins include a variation of Middle English *flokken*, "to flap, flutter" which may further originate from Old Norse *flaka*, "to flicker, flutter, hang loose." These may be derived from Proto-Germanic *flaga*, and the Proto-Indo-European root *plak* ("to be flat").

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Local News

Grand Marshal Nominations for Poolesville Day Open

By Link Hoewing

In 1992, Poolesville held its first Poolesville Day. The event was a small affair, but it continued to be held each year, growing in size and in the number of vendors, entertainment venues, and attendees.

Every year since that time—until the pandemic struck—Poolesville has observed its annual festival, celebrating the Town of Poolesville, its residents, and the communities in the Upcounty of which it is a part. This year, Poolesville Day will take place on September 21 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. with activities, vendors, and music spread from one end of Fisher Avenue at Poolesville Elementary School to the Historic West End with the Electric Vehicle Show, and all over Whalen Commons.

A hallmark of Poolesville Day has always been its parade down Poolesville's main street, Fisher Avenue, beginning at Poolesville Elementary School and ending at the corner of intersection of Fisher Avenue and West Willard Road. Leading the parade has always been the Grand Marshal, a person or group nominated by the citizens who symbolizes community involvement, leadership, and commitment to bettering our community.

Grand Marshals are selected by the Poolesville Day Committee from nominations submitted by residents. The committee uses a set of guidelines

to consider the nominations and asks those submitting the name of a person or organization to be Grand Marshal to "describe a specific act or acts (personal or civic) of outstanding service which has been generally recognized as placing the individual or group (nominated) in a category well above others for sustained and distinguished service and commitment to the Town of Poolesville and its surrounding areas."

It is important to note that the guidelines do not specify that any person or organization nominated has to live in Poolesville or its surrounding areas. The nomination is focused rather on what the person or organization has contributed to the health and well-being of the Poolesville area. It is possible, for example, that a county or state official who does not live in our area may have done a lot to make the lives of citizens in the Poolesville area better, for example, by introducing and passing legislation that is extremely beneficial to all of us.

Interestingly, not all nominees for Grand Marshal have been individuals. A number of organizations involved in community service in the Poolesville area have been nominated in the past. Jake Perkins, a founder of Poolesville Day and its leader for many years until his death in 2007, was posthumously named Grand Marshal, and his aunt and uncle appeared in the parade in his place.

Here is the list of people or organizations who have been selected for Grand Marshal, going all the way back to 2004:

2023: Kenny Mallow, Local Contractor

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Continued from page 4.

Letter to the Editor

K2 Café and Poolesville Hardware, thank you.

Thank you to the local businesses who donated time or materials, Ashley Signs, Ballooney Bin, DandyBee Honey, and Kimberly Yourick; to the local businesses who opened up their parking, Charles H. Jamison, LLC and Anytime Fitness Poolesville; to the local vendors who helped us pioneer this event, Poolesville Design, LapCreativehub, BannerBee Company, Molly's Farm, Pressed by Jeremy, Queen of Beans Plant Based Cooking, and more.

To the performers who stepped up to the stage to share their talents, including the Riverworks Art Center

Reserve Wind Ensemble under the direction of Michelle Palmer, our lights and sound expert Michael Stettes, and our MC and DJ specialists Von and Zeke with jurnni; to our community volunteers who helped set up and take down for the event, SooAnn Roberts and kids, Keir Soderberg and family, Jennifer Singh and family, Robin Lombard, and many more, thank you.

Finally, last but not least, thank you to everyone who came out and spent the evening with us. You are what makes our progressive rural community the special place that it is. Thank you, everyone, for showing up and adding color to our community!

Sarah Paksima
Town of Poolesville commissioner

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Poolsville Day 2025 Parade





Poolesville Day 2025 Parade





Poolesville Scarecrow Competition 2025 - Pink Bony Club 1st Place

Funding Sources 2025	
Town of Poolesville Community Grant	\$2,500.00
MoCo Pride Center	\$13,825.00
Nora Roberts Foundation	\$0.00
Gamma Mu Grant	\$0.00
Tegan and Sara Foundation	\$0.00
Private Donations (Mihm)	\$500.00
	\$16,825.00
PrideFest 2025	-\$12,539.56
Poolesville Day 2025	-\$361.63
Scarecrow & RHPS Movie 2025	-\$389.30

Total Remaining:	\$3,534.51
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In Detail

Expenditures 2025 PRIDEFEST				
Date	Vendor	Amount	Paid to Vendor or Reimbursed?	Check #
	Event Insurance - Stump Insurance	\$245.00	Stump Insurance - V	180
	PACC membership 2025	\$105.00	PACC -V	181
	Amazon Order	\$968.44	Sarah - R	183
	Posters Printing	\$88.09	Sam - R	184
	Monocacy monacle - Ad	\$450.00	Monocacy Monacle - V	182
5/22	Cugini's Pizza for Art Workshop JPMS	\$91.58	Sarah - R	185
5/22	Dunkin Donuts for Art Workshop PHS	\$41.17	Sarah - R	185
05/30	2x2 Stickers	\$254.43	Sam - R	186
5/30	Plow and Star Farms baby chicks	\$233.00	Sarah - R	185
6/2/25	Grace Cotting - MC/DJ	\$500.00	Grace - V	187
	Jay Selway	\$100.00	Jay Selway - V	188
6/5/25	Amazon Order (crafts etc)	\$1,008.79	Sarah - R	185

	Riverworks	\$1,000.00		189
6/11	Ballooney Bin Payment 1	\$248.47	Sarah - R	185
6/5/25	COSTCO chairs, table, tent	\$1,250.72	Sarah - R	185
6/11	CVS candy, sunblock, bug spray, Gift Card	\$224.23	Sarah - R	185
6/11	John's Hardware Duct Tape	\$30.38	Sarah - R	185
6/16/25	Balooney Bin Payment 2	\$333.26	Sarah - R	185
6/16/25	Ixiana Wilmot Photobooth	\$150.00	Sarah - R	185
6/16/25	Jacob Kelley Drag Performer	\$250.00	Sarah - R	185
6/11/25	Michaels - ribbon and such - Kate	\$71.50	Sarah - R	191
6/11/25	Harris Teeter mason jars -Kate	\$57.00	Sarah - R	191
5/13/25	GSA Shirts to Lisa Shartiger	\$88.00	Sarah - R	191
5/22/25	Pride tattoos & paint - Amazon	\$21.00	Sarah - R	191
6/30/25	Juuni MC and equiptment DJ	\$500.00	Sarah - R	191
7/14/25	Story Tapestries	\$4,229.50	Story Tapestries - V	192
		\$12,539.56		
Expenses				
Poolesville Day:				
Parade	Candy & Ribbons			
	Mini Pride Flags			

	Bags	\$302.35		
Club Info Booth	Tattoos/Face Painting			
	Stickers			
	Pins	\$59.28		
Total		\$361.63	check # 192	\$362
Expenses: WUMCO Scarecrow Competition Social Gathering and Art Installation and Rocky Picture Horror Show Movie Night				
	Walmart Art Supplies	\$281.34		
	Dollar General Snacks & Supplies	\$38.63		
	Poolesville Lawn John's Hardware	\$53.44		
	RHPS Amazon	\$15.89		
Total		\$389.30	Check # 194	389.3