

QOHS Academic Club in "It's Academic" Playoffs

By KAREN O'KEEFE

Quick - Quick - Quick! What mythological creature has the whole world on his shoulders?

Still thinking?

Too late. The answer is "Atlas."

Welcome to the world of the Quince Orchard High School Academic Club.

The club, a group of around 20 students, fields two "quiz bowl" teams (A Team and B Team) that compete regularly throughout the school year in tournaments. The students in the Academic Club spend the whole school year

studying and practicing for competition, and the Quince Orchard High School Quiz Bowl team is nationally ranked. Team members compete at least once a month in a variety of Quiz Bowl tournaments hosted by other high schools and universities.

Many people will see the team on television Saturday, April 26 at 10 a.m., competing in the playoff round on NBC4's "It's Academic." The actual playoff round will be taped Saturday, March 8. Quince Orchard faces two tough opponents, Georgetown Day and

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Photo | Phil Fabrizio

On Feb. 16, a party at Largent's Restaurant & Bar launched the two-year, 25-event anniversary of Kentlands' founding. John Schlichting and Ailene Renzi, co-chairs of the K25 committee, Gaithersburg Mayor Sidney Katz and Michael Watkins, architect, address the celebrants.

At 25, Assessing "Profound" Kentlands Impact

By KAREN O'KEEFE

The irony of new urbanism is that it really isn't new at all. In fact, communities like Kentlands, which include the elements of traditional neighborhoods and are accessible to public transit, were the norm until the onslaught of post-World War II suburban sprawl that was fueled by the automobile. There was a time when all communities, including cities, featured animated street activity and access to multimodal transportation—walking, cycling, automobiles, buses and other pub-

lic transit options.

As evidenced by Kentlands, the landscape of these former places was aesthetically more pleasing than modern towns and cities, whose primary design objective has evolved into accommodating increasing numbers of automobiles with more and wider roads.

Traditional towns and cities also "worked," meaning they were productive, economically sustainable, nice places to live for a population of diverse incomes and means. When the overriding planning

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Photo | Courtesy of Joshua Schuman

Representing the QOHS Academic Club are (front row, left to right) Lawrence Simon, Sean Manners, Jacob Adler; (back row, left to right) QOHS Principal Carole A. Working, Coach Joshua Schuman and daughter Sidney Rose.

AWLMC Is the Cat's Meow

By PAM SCHIPPER

If you're looking to adopt a cat or if you find yourself reincarnated someday and somehow in the feline persuasion and in need of a family, head to the blue clapboard, two-story house at 12 Park Ave. in Olde Towne, Gaithersburg. This no-kill cat shelter run by the Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County (AWLMC) feels like the warmest of

homes—and the AWLMC's success at finding cats new homes couldn't be better.

Enter through the back, and you'll find a brightly lit and art-filled home. It diverges pleasantly from the norm in that paintings, murals and figurines are all cat-themed, many created by artist and AWLMC volunteer Doris Bryant. Five spacious rooms are outfitted for cat comfort and safety. Doors are screened so the cats can interact more; window shades

are the roll and not Venetian variety dangerous to curious cats. Comfy sofas are covered with blankets, and cat scratch trees abound.

All of this charm is powered by a knowledgeable and dedicated team of more than 150 active volunteers and a six-member board. Some foster the felines, others are part of the cat care crew that seven days per week tackles daily cleaning, feeding, medicating and grooming, and still more do cat enrichment, a special time six days per week when they work with and get to know the cats.

Each day, the three to five member cat enrichment group compiles an assessment checklist, "and then they take their information and compile it weekly into a document that we call 'Purrnotes,'" explained AWLMC President Jeanne App. "It gives the adoption counselors who may not be here as much during the week an idea of what's been going on, who's getting along with whom, different things that we've learned that may have cropped up during the week.

"This is a fairly unique program that's catch-



Photos | Phil Fabrizio

Luna Lee, a four-year-old dilute tortie, peers down from atop a cat tree in her cat suite at AWLMC.



Jeanne App, president of the AWLMC, plays with Rafferty, a four-month old kitten currently in AWLMC foster care.

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■ CAT SHELTER

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ing on and becoming more widespread," she continued, "but we've been doing it for several years in our organization. ... It's very, very helpful. It's great for the cats, too."

The AWLMC mission is to match healthy and happy cats with the right families. Beyond the veterinary services that the shelter is able to provide through partnerships with local vets, each cat is made to feel secure in its environment. Average stay at the shelter is 45 days. "Obviously, there are exceptions," App said. "Some cats are harder to adopt. Some cats barely get their feet on the floor here before somebody scoops them up."

One long-time resident is four-year-old Luna Lee, a dilute tortie with apricot highlights on her eyebrows and chest who came to AWLMC through the county shelter. Her family, themselves homeless and headed to a homeless shelter, needed to give her up. "We were told that she walked in on her own, following the family like a dog," App said. "Everybody fell in love with her. ... She is a laid back girl. She has to decide if she wants to come out and show herself off, so she gets overlooked quite a bit."

Some cats stay in foster until they are adopted out. Of eight kittens recently fostered by Mary Ellen McGlone, half have already found homes. Sherlock, Whimsy, Sochi and Rafferty remain.

"Mary Ellen does a wonderful job fostering, working with the kittens. She spends an inordinate amount of time with them, which makes all the difference," App said.

"I've been fostering since this group started in 2005," McGlone shared. "We used to have more animals in foster. We also used to have cats that stayed longer in foster, but we've been very successful. Our intake team has done a really good job of getting us very adoptable cats."

AWLMC partners with the Montgomery County shelter. An intake team takes adoptable cats and kittens out, freeing the municipal shelter to take in more animals. Some years, AWLMC has taken almost half of all cats left at the municipal shelter.

Once a cat is in the care of AWLMC, it is guaranteed a home somewhere. "We never, ever, ever euthanize for space, period," emphasized App. Even cats with serious health issues are cared for through the AWLMC's Guardian Foster program. And if a cat is adopted out by AWLMC and the placement doesn't work, AWLMC always takes the cat back.

AWLMC, an all-volunteer and non-profit 501(c)(3), started in 2005, primarily as a foster-based organization. In 2007, it opened its first no-kill shelter near the Montgomery County Airpark. Since the shelter was in an industrial park, it was not set up well for adoption visits. Cats were taken to local pet stores for adoption days.

In September 2011, AWLMC moved to its present location on Park Avenue. While the nonprofit continues to do off-site adoptions at the Kentlands Petsmart, most cat adoptions take place at this welcoming shelter. "We went with a home-like setting so that people would be comfortable visiting with the animal to determine whether it was the right pet for their family situation or their household," App explained.



Photo | Submitted

Audrey Ackerman sleeps with Midnight and Whiskers, the cats that her family adopted as kittens from AWLMC.

Kentlands resident Jennifer Ackerman visited the shelter with her family, looking for the best pet for her young daughter Audrey. Ultimately, they decided that a kitten would be the right choice. Since AWLMC's kittens are all in foster care, the Ackermans attended an adoption day at Kentlands Petsmart and found Midnight and Whiskers.

"They were very professional" Ackerman said of the AWLMC. "They knew the temperaments. The kittens were well cared for. Their foster parent was very good. They were healthy, chipped, neutered/spayed. Their shots were up-to-date, and they were clean. They're just model pets."

Ackerman, whose last experience with pet adoption was from a humane society in Georgia 17 years ago, said that she didn't know what to expect when they first visited the AWLMC. "We were more than pleased," she said.

Audrey, who is now in kindergarten, dotes on the kittens and carries them around—one in a little cloth basket and one that she just picks up like a stuffed animal.

"They have great temperaments," Ackerman said, "and that's because of their fostering."

In addition to cat adoptions, AWLMC offers low-cost spay/neuters for cats and dogs and has given out more than 2400 spay/neuter certificates since 2010. In February and August, AWLMC gives out free spay/neuters. Its Chompers Food Bank has distributed 20,000 pounds of cat and dog food to pets and owners in need. A Seniors for Seniors program encourages people over 60 to adopt cats older than 6.

The Park Avenue shelter is dedicated to the late Pauline Polly Buel. "She was one of the original, real forces in animal rescue in this area," said App. "She will always be a part of this organization in spirit."

Adoption hours are every Saturday, noon to 3 p.m., and Wednesday and Friday evenings, 6 to 8 p.m. For more information, visit www.awlmc.org or call 301.740.2511.