



Civic Association News & Notes

Notes from the President

by Lisa Patterson-Troike

Happy 2012! It is the beginning of February, as I write this article, and it is 60 degrees and sunny. I have lived in the DC area for over 21 years and have never had a more pleasant winter than this one. One of my Darnestown friends overheard me bragging about the weather and reminded me that many of our biggest snow storms happen in February. I hope that isn't the case this year. Punxsutawney Phil didn't see his shadow and six more weeks of winter have been predicted!

The other day while I was running errands, my husband called to alert me that a fox with an injured front leg was limping and sitting in our yard in severe pain. I rushed home to determine what the best course of action should be. We live on Esworthy Road and it is very common to see foxes prowling around day and night. I knew what Montgomery County's policy was regarding foxes. If I called 311 for animal control, the fox would be euthanized. I wanted to explore other options.

SPRING SOCIAL

Wednesday, May 9, 6 - 8 PM

at Smokey Glen Farm

See page 15 for Reservation Form

Next DCA Town Meeting

**Thursday, March 15
7:30 p.m.**

Candidate Forum for our 6th Congressional District

**Darnestown Presbyterian Church
Route 28 at Turkey Foot Road**

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**If you are considering starting a business that requires a
 Special Exception, start by contacting the DCA.**

Inquiries concerning the Darnestown Civic Association should be
 directed to Lisa Patterson-Troiike (301-548-0999;
 lisaapatterson@aol.com) or mailed to
 DCA, 14132B Darnestown Road, Darnestown, MD 20874.

Providers listed below are residents of the
 Darnestown area. They are included here as a
 service to the community.

**These individuals are not endorsed by the
 Darnestown Civic Association or its
 Executive Board.**

Individuals listed are responsible for keeping
 this information and availability current.

BABY SITTERS

Emily Agate ¹	age 15	301-417-0980
Sarah Agate ^{1,3}	age 17	301-417-0980
Marian de Almeida ¹	age 18	240-252-1776
Alex de Almeida ^{1,2}	age 16	240-252-1776
Briana Boothe ¹	age 13	301-977-4247
Rachel Cone	age 14	301-330-1154
Chris Helmey ³	age 17	301-519-3814
Jordan Helmey ³	age 19	301-519-3814
Kiersten Helmey	age 14	301-519-3814
Zoe Kaplan ^{1,3}	age 15	301-977-8027
Allison Long ¹	age 14	301-990-7511
Betsi Micholas	age 14	301-990-0221
Blake Micholas	age 13	301-990-0221
Drew Micholas	age 14	301-990-0221
Mackenzie Meyers		301-990-6660
Sydney Meyers		301-990-6660
Mitchell O'Rourke ¹	age 13	301-947-5487
Claire Pohl	age 15	301-926-8801
Emily Pohl	age 13	301-926-8801
Katie Pohl ³	age 17	301-926-8801
Trish Poulos	adult	301-208-1007
Kelsey Warren	age 16	301-216-1919

MOTHER'S HELPERS

Zoe Kaplan ^{1,3}	age 15	301-977-8027
Allison Long ¹	age 14	301-990-7511
Emily Pohl	age 13	301-467-8801

PET SITTERS/HOUSE SITTERS

Gwynne Cafaro ⁴	age 14	301-963-7178
Rachel Cone ⁴	age 14	301-330-1154
Chris Helmey	age 17	301-519-3814
Jordan Helmey	age 19	301-519-3814
Kiersten Helmey	age 14	301-519-3814
Zoe Kaplan	age 13	301-997-8027
Mackenzie Meyers		301-990-6660
Sydney Meyers		301-990-6660
Mac O'Rourke	age 12	301-947-5487
Emily Pohl	age 12	301-926-8801
Trish Poulos	adult	301-208-1007
Grace Wallerstedt ⁵	age 20	301-590-0698

MUSIC LESSONS

TJ Callahan ⁵	Guitar	301-379-5646
Brandon Corydon	Guitar	301-221-0456
Justin Fakler	Guitar	301-814-5111
Jennifer Suess	Voice	301-977-2605
David Tony ⁵	Drums	301-990-6550
Michael Waddell	Trombone/Horn	301-990-6770
Stefanie Zaner	Clarinet	240-678-8319

NOTARY SERVICES

Laura Bivans	301-977-4734
Bruce Deppa	301-963-0567
Tina Kalil	301-948-5364
Elisa Lane	301-990-2993
Frank Mielenz	301-987-7190

¹ Completed babysitting certification program.

² Boys only. ³ Certified lifeguard, CPR. ⁴ All animals, including horses. ⁵ Summer only.



Notes from the President

(Cont'd from p.1)

I called DNR (Department of Natural Resources) and asked if they or someone they knew could help the injured fox. I was told the fox was a RVS (rabies vector species) and I was to do nothing. In fact, I was told it was downright illegal for me to trap and transport it. I spent the next few hours on the computer researching what could be done. The state of Maryland recognizes the following animals as RVS: fox, raccoon, skunk and bat. The truth of the matter is that any mammal can carry rabies, these just happen to be the most common. I went to the DNR website www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/rehab.asp and got a list of rehabilitators! The site www.wildliferescueleague.org/ is also helpful and lists 703.440.0800 as a hotline to call if you find wildlife you believe is in need of human assistance. Our fox actually never got help. It disappeared into the woods and did not return. If you see an animal in trouble, do not approach it, contact animal control or a wildlife specialist!

Anyone notice that we haven't (knock on wood) lost power in the wind storms we've had lately? My lights don't even flicker anymore. Dare I say that the 21 am very proud that Pepco has been able to improve their service to Darnestown. I'm sure there will be power outages in the future, but at least they aren't as common as they were. I wish to congratulate the Pepco task force that was put together by Ike Leggett's office. Their findings helped bring about a hefty fine and more regulations to our electric utility provider. One of the people on the task force, our very own Art Slesinger, brought a wealth of knowledge and helped the task force stay on track. Thanks again, Art, for helping Darnestown stay energized!

Save the date! The annual DCA Spring Social is set for May 9th at Smokey Glen Farm. RSVP and payment must be received no later than April 30th. If interested, fill out the enclosed form. We had a great turnout last year and hope to see even more of you this year!

Darnestown Directory

by Sarah Scherer

One of the many things that makes Darnestown so special is our Directory, which we publish every 2 years.

No more fumbling through the white pages, asking Siri to look up a # for Sarah Scherer (good luck!), or relying on your computer during the occasional power outage. All you need is the Directory and a good flashlight to

reach out to friends and neighbors alike. We will publish the next edition at the end of this year, so please keep me apprised of changes in your neighborhood. I can be reached at (240) 683-8533.

A big welcome to some new neighbors -

Ken and Christine Long
13521 Scottish Autumn Lane
301-569-6367

Greg & Aimée Conroy
15421 Deep Bottom Road
301-977-4033

Seneca Forest Project

by Steve Ellis

We are coming up on the second year of the DCA deer enclosure project. DCA volunteers built two fenced areas in the Seneca State Park adjacent to Darnestown that are each roughly 30,000 sq. ft. An acre is 43,560 sq. ft. The primary purposes for the project/experiment is to observe the differences within the fenced areas that prevent deer from eating the native plants, to protect a small part our natural forest flora and fauna from the observable devastation of over grazing and foreign invasive plants, and to establish a plant bank for species that are not surviving in our surrounding woodlands.

Given the mild winter thus far (written in early February) the growing season may commence earlier than normal. Thus, volunteers should ready the two areas by mid-March. Happily, this year's work load is far less than last year. Things to be done include: reestablish a few corner post supports, blow the leaves out of the enclosures to match the leaf cover of the outside areas, consider a third gate on the lower side of the Upland site, create a more direct pathway to the



Steve Ellis and Dave Bivans working on the deer enclosure.
Photo by James Wheeler.



Creek site to allow better access for all, remove the Japanese barberry patches from the Creek site, and tackle any other tasks deemed advantageous.

Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) was introduced to the U.S. in 1875. Seeds were sent from Russia to the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. In 1896, it was planted at the New York Botanic Garden. It was eventually promoted as a substitute for *Berberis Vulgaris*, an exotic plant introduced and used by early settlers from Europe for hedgerows, dyes and jams. The bright red berries are eaten by birds. *BV* was later found to be a host for the black stem rust of wheat. Where it is well established it displaces many native herbaceous and woody plants. {* from *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Areas, National Park Service/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4th edition, 2010.*}

Removal of the non-native invasive plants is pursued with the advice and direction of the Seneca State Park management. We are fortunate that Kerrie Kyde is our advisor. She is a Habitat Ecologist and Invasive Plant Specialist with the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources. Her office is located in the Seneca State Park off of Clopper Road. It is hoped that in mid & late spring, volunteers will remove such invasive plants from the sites as garlic mustard, ground ivy, mile-a-minute and any other invasives considered detrimental. Japanese stiltgrass can be pulled in late summer.

What's happening inside? At the Upland site the Mountain Laurel has numerous leaf clusters that have sprouted all over the stems (not occurring outside the fence), and a few tree saplings and other new plants have survived in both sites. Those who have been involved share a great anticipation for the renewal of some native spring wildflowers and an increase in the number of tree and shrub saplings to survive the next season. Kerrie Kyde wants to lead a field tour in early May to identify and possibly catalogue the new and wondrous survivors. To learn more, tour the sites and volunteer: contact Steve Ellis 301-330-0699.

Darnestown Civic Association Hosts Candidates for Discussion

by Michael Gottlieb

The Darnestown Civic Association, as a non-partisan organization, has invited announced candidates for the

recently re-districted United States House of Representatives 6th Congressional District (which now includes Darnestown) to come to our next Darnestown Civic Association Town Meeting on March 15, 2012, for a discussion of issues of importance to Darnestown. As you may know, this is going to be a highly contested race since the redistricting changes have prompted several additional candidates to seek this seat. In order to ensure that the candidates discussions are relevant to Darnestown and run smoothly, all questions must be submitted to the DCA board in advance of the debate. If you have any questions or issues you'd like the candidates to address, please e-mail them to mgottlieb@apatoffpeters.com on or before March 7, 2012. Based on the responses I receive, I will compile a list of the questions which seem most relevant to the concerns of the citizens of Darnestown for the candidates to address in their discussion. Please note that there will be no questions directly from the floor, though we will encourage the candidates to be available for individual discussions after the meeting.

Please attend this event to hear the candidates' positions on issues that are relevant to Darnestown and the 6th District.

Social Committee

by Lisa Patterson-Troike

This will be the last year we celebrate the Holiday Tree Lighting at the "island" located at Ancient Oak Drive and Darnestown Road. Steve Ellis was in charge of placing the lights on the tree for many, many years and was succeeded by the Beautz family. The tree has grown very tall and the branches are so brittle, that stringing the lights has become quite a scary proposition. We haven't been able to attach more light strings because it would possibly "blow" the small outlet that provides electricity. Special thanks goes out to Billy Herrington for arranging Santa's schedule and the Beautz Family for providing cookies, hot cocoa, fire pit and an overall inviting atmosphere.

Darnestown families and friends have come to the gatherings in fog, rain, sleet and snow. Nothing will stop them from coming. We appreciate all the support we have gotten from you and look forward to seeing you at our new location, Heritage Park, next to Harris Teeter. Construction at the park is slowly making progress and we have been promised an evergreen with an electrical outlet so we may continue our tradition for years to come!



The DCA Spring Social will be at Smokey Glen Farm on Wednesday, May 9th! PLEASE FILL OUT AND SEND IN THE RSVP FORM located in this *Little Acorn*. \$15 for adults, \$10 for children 3-11 years old, and under 3 free. Smokey Glen will serve its world famous bbq chicken with all the trimmings, including refreshments and smoked pies for dessert. Don't miss this chance to meet and reacquaint yourself with Darnestown friends and neighbors!

Reliable Utilities

by Art Slesinger

Is the PEPCO opera at an end? On December 21, 2011, the Public Service Commission (PSC) finally ruled on case 9240, started in August of 2010, to investigate the issues surrounding PEPCO reliability. After 18 months of fact gathering, hearings, and cross examination, the PSC issued its final order. That order requires PEPCO to pay a \$1 million fine for their "imprudence"; provide PSC with a detailed 5 year work plan; file annual and quarterly reports on their progress; improve filings with more specific causes of outages; and a few other minor things.

Where does this leave the citizens of Darnestown? Looking at the individual players we can note the following.

PEPCO has spent a good deal of time and money fixing the broken system. The Order does not preclude them from cost recovery for their effort, but if the numerical metrics for service reliability remain dismal, PSC has suggested they will deny those requests. In many ways the annual rate structure has a retrospective element allowing the utility to recapture unanticipated cost, e.g. major storm damage. Bottom line; expect higher bills and better service. The issue of outage recovery after storms was also noted, and PEPCO has committed to getting ready sooner. I believe they have not been seriously tested similar to 2010, but there are some hopeful signs.

The job the PSC did was sound. This was a thorough and very independent investigation. The PSC hired a contractor, paid by PEPCO; the Office of People's Council hired a contractor and so did the Maryland

Department of Energy. In the end, many of the PEPCO excuses were rejected by the PSC. The argument that MoCo has a unique tree canopy, that service was "stable" and customer expectations were higher were declared poppycock by the PSC. One might have hoped for a fine with more teeth or a rebate to the citizens who were damaged, but PSC demurred. In the end, they chose not to micromanage PEPCO and determined that extracting money needed for improvements was counterproductive. They have made it clear that PEPCO has to do better, and if it does not, the millions being spent will not be returned by the customers. I believe that PSC got the political message but a certain cynicism remains. While PSC noted PEPCO service deteriorated over a 9 year span, PSC had that data and should have seen the train wreck coming. It was the classic; it took a train wreck to fix the tracks.

The County did its best considering it has very little leverage. The utility is regulated by the State through the PSC. Leggett followed through on his decision to intervene in the PSC proceedings. That MoCo got standing to intervene was noteworthy. In theory you and I are represented by the Office of Peoples' Counsel. MoCo successfully argued, through its hired counsel, that the commercial and industrial section was not represented and therefore, got standing to intervene. Most of the authors of the MOCO report are volunteers and/or had full time jobs. When challenged by PEPCO to send the authors of the MoCo report for cross examination, the County sent Tom Street's staff from Leggett's office to undergo three days of hostile cross examination.

We must all wait and see if the Reliability Enhancement Program PEPCO has advertised will deliver the goods. Those closest to the issue are concerned that the culture within PEPCO that allowed this debacle to occur has not changed. They were clearly defensive throughout the process. More surprising was their unwillingness to stand up and say major changes are needed to make PEPCO what everyone thinks and wants them to become.

Community Interest

Hazardous Black Rock Road

by Dick Jurgena

In early November, a member of the Darnestown community discussed a safety issue of water



continuously flowing over Black Rock Road on the East side of Seneca Creek. According to the member, the road freezes over in the winter creating pot holes and hazardous driving conditions leading to one major and many minor accidents. The member also indicated local residents had been complaining about the problem for years with no results. The Board discussed the matter at some length and decided that, although the condition was outside the "official boundaries of Darnestown, a number of our members live on or utilize Black Rock Road in their daily lives.

An e-mail was sent to the Montgomery County Department of Highway Safety (DHS) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) inviting them to send representatives to the December Town Meeting to discuss possible conflicts between the Seneca Creek Park Administration and the Department of Highway Safety. Both declined; however, after consideration and some prompting by Bob Thompson, our Board's Vice President, Ms. Catherine Matthews, the County Executive's Regional Director for the Up-county area who works with county and state departments as well as the business community to resolve problems, sent an email on December 15th advising of their intention to address the problem in the next few weeks.

On January 8th the water is no longer flowing over the road due to an improved irrigation ditch on the upland side of the road leading to a culvert under the road. On January 12th, after about an inch of rain the night before, the water was flowing through the culvert and did not appear to have overflowed the road. On the other hand, the approximately 12" culvert was substantially filled with silt and some water was beginning to pool around the intake side of the culvert. This appears to be a temporary fix and will probably result in water over the road again, when the water in the culvert freezes up enough to stop it up.

On January 25th, a letter was sent to Ms. Matthews, thanking her and everyone involved in their efforts to resolve this problem. At the same time they were encouraged to reduce the silt in the culvert to relieve the pooling problem before freezing starts and to consider putting a new culvert further up the road to reduce road maintenance by eliminating seepage under the road resulting from the constant flow of water upland (West) side of the road.

The members utilizing Black Rock Road are encouraged to develop a temporary committee to continue monitoring this ongoing project and to keep the

Board informed. For additional information and help in establishing a committee please e-mail Dick Jurgena at rjurgena@admail.com or call (301)840-1187 or email Scott Mostrom at scottmostrom@hotmail.com or call (301) 760-6444.

Great Seneca Science City

by Art Slesinger

Since the Master Plan negotiations were completed two years ago, the developers of property around the Shady Grove Hospital, called Great Seneca Science City, have been busy with submittals for development, especially Johns Hopkins University Real Estate. JHU owns not only the Belward Farm but a large tract adjoining the hospital. Right now, the Master Plan limits development to about 11 million square feet. To get to the total Master Plan allocation of 17 million square feet, certain bench marks (i.e. staging) milestones must be met. To go past 11 million square feet, the Corridor Cities Rapid Transit train (or bus line) must be funded by the State. There has been a loud silence from the Governor's office, and it is clear that Maryland just does not have the resources to start the project.

Regardless, JHU is starting with its submittals to Parks and Planning to place up to 4.7 million square feet on Mrs. Banks old Belward Farm site. [Note, that is bigger than the Pentagon which has dramatically better rail and road service.] JHU has a current allowance of 1.8 million square feet which are part of the 11 million square feet mentioned above. The plans for 4.7 million square feet have triggered the estate of Mrs. Banks to file an action to enjoin JHU from building their expansive plans as violating the terms of the purchase deal with Mrs. Banks. Her intent, by taking about 20% of what the property was worth, was for JHU to build a low key academic campus. The exact wording is open to interpretation but the intent was clear. JHU behavior has been negatively characterized by some as crass and by others as a complete abrogation of their obligation under the terms of the agreement. JHU has filed a motion with the court to dismiss the action and the estate has filed their answer. As of this writing, we do not know the outcome of those filings.

To summarize, JHU has a 1.8 million square foot allowance, but they have made it clear they will only build when they have a tenant who desires to move there. Hence, JHU is going to be a landlord at best and not an active participant in the local community.

Darne Bloomers Garden Club

by Merikay Smith

Spring—there's no better time to be a gardener. I would like to write about the glorious spring blooming bulbs, especially deer-resistant snow glories, hyacinths, camassia, fritillaria and daffodils. Instead, I feel compelled to draw attention to a more urgent gardening topic.

I have noticed a particularly noxious plant invading Darnestown—one with the potential to destroy wooded areas and be a garden nuisance: mile-a-minute weed (scientific name *Persicaria perfoliata*, AKA devil's tail or Asiatic tearthumb). You do not want mile-a-minute on your property. This spring as you are out in your yard or in nearby woods, please be on the lookout for this alien weed.

Native to Asia, mile-a-minute is aggressively spreading across the northeastern U.S. It is a self-pollinating annual which begins germinating in March/April. The thorny vines can grow 6 inches in a day and seed prolifically. Mile-a-minute creates dense canopies capable of smothering out other plants. It has triangular leaves, thin stems and nasty barbs along its stems and under its leaves (hence its name "tearthumb").



Photo -www.nps.gov; Drawing-www.discoverlife.org

Each vine sets blue-purple fruits (June – October) which contain seeds. If we collectively remove mile a minute vines before they set fruit, we can control this invasion. If we ignore it, mile-a-minute vines will continue to disperse their seeds by birds, ants, chipmunks, squirrels, deer and rainwater/streams. The seeds remain viable for six years, so becoming mile-a-minute free will take persistent effort. Property should be rechecked several times from early April through early July to remove new plants.

Experts suggest wearing gloves and long-sleeves to pull out the vines. Luckily, the roots are shallow and the weed is easy to pull when young. If fruits are present the vines should be bagged and incinerated or disposed of in a landfill. If you know you had mile-a-minute on your property last year, you can treat the area with a pre-emergent herbicide to kill plants as they germinate (in March). Large infestations can be controlled using an herbicide such as glyphosate, though use care not to apply it to other plants. Do this by June to avoid contaminating the area with mile-a-minute seeds.

A relatively small amount of effort at the first sight of the mile-a-minute weed can save much time and expense later. If you are interested in additional information on this or other local invasive plants, check out www.mdinvasivesp.org.

As a recent member of Darne Bloomers, I can say that they are a welcoming group who hold exceptionally well-organized meetings. Meetings are the second Thursday of each month at the Darnestown Presbyterian Church. Please call the president, Elizabeth Weaver, at 240-388-3651 if you would like to attend. The club would like to welcome you by having supplies prepared for you and to advise you if the meetings will be held in other locations. In December we had a holiday house tour at the homes of members Barbara Andreassen and Carol Gimmel. In Barbara's home we enjoyed seeing her truly exquisite holiday decorations, particularly her handcrafted Santa figures and themed Christmas trees. At Carol's we enjoyed a sumptuous pot luck and artistic displays of ferns, blooming orchids, paperwhites, and poinsettias as well as clever use of natural materials including a large white birch branch with cardinals perched in it set against a green wall.

As a new club member, I have been amazed at the creative themed table decorations for each meeting (each member serves on a host committee which prepares for one meeting). When Diane Lewis, Brookside Gardens adult education director, spoke on native ferns, the table decor and refreshments featured fern fronds. We learned that ferns are generally deer-resistant and easy to grow when given the proper conditions. Native ferns you might consider for your garden are the northern maidenhair fern, rattlesnake fern, hay-scented fern, toothed wood fern, shield fern, sensitive fern, cinnamon fern, interrupted fern, royal fern, Christmas fern, bracken fern, and the netted or chain fern.



Photos and information on the characteristics and growing conditions for these native ferns can be found in the *Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping: Chesapeake Bay Watershed* (in print or available free online). This is an extremely useful book if you want to learn about or use native plants. It includes ferns, grasses, herbaceous plants, shrubs, trees and vines. Icons for each plant indicate types of insects or animals attracted to the plant.

Copies of the above book were given to the Darne Bloomers in January's presentation on rain gardens from RainScapes (Montgomery Co. Dept. of Environmental Protection). The basic principle of a rain garden is to create a shallow area where stormwater runoff can collect and slowly be absorbed by plants (or percolate into the ground) rather than rush directly to local streams. Because much of our county is covered by impermeable surfaces (roads, roofs, driveways) or minimally absorbent lawns, rain carries more sediments and pollution into our waterways. More information on creating a rain garden is available online—the county offers rebates to help offset the costs of installation. Each of us can take simple steps to help, even if we don't have a rain garden: don't use fertilizer or pesticides near drainage areas (and use them only sparingly and in dry weather); never dispose of lawn or garden chemicals in storm drains (this is illegal); compost yard waste; use nontoxic products on lawns/gardens; grasscycle your lawn clippings directly on your grass when mowing; install rain barrels at your downspouts; plant trees.

Ornamental grasses will be the subject of February's meeting with a hands-on project creating a moss basket in March. Summer flowering bulbs for April and a luncheon at Meadowlark Gardens in May complete the club's year.

Darnestown Day – May 5

Darnestown Day – Widening Involvement

by Elisabeth Monaco Kraft

Plans for the Third Annual Darnestown Day will be well underway by the time you read this. But there is still time to get involved. St. Nicholas Church and the Seneca Academy, who have partnered in this activity to date, are hoping to expand participation this year. Specifically, St. Nick's would like to invite our fellow houses of worship to become involved by putting up a booth (at no charge) and perhaps in other ways as well. If your congregation, school, non-profit organization, or business would like to find out more about how they might become engaged

in the festivities, please contact the Darnestown Day Coordinator, Elisabeth Kraft, at dday@saintnicks.com.

Those Who Serve...

by Madeline Dalessio



Army Captain Simon Youngblut, 82nd Airborne, returned to Fort Bragg NC after completing his deployment to Iraq in late November. He was promoted to Captain while in Iraq.

Hannah Youngblut was promoted to First Lieutenant. Hannah is stationed at Fort Gordon, Augusta, Georgia and is assigned to the Army's Adjutant General's staff.

If you would like future columns to include your child, spouse or self, please contact Madeline D'Alessio at dalessio@comcast.net.

Sports News & Events

Softball - Join in the Fun and Action!

by Dave Bivans, Highlanders

In just over a month, Mother Nature willing, that old familiar cry "Play Ball!" will be heard 'round the country, to include Darnestown's very own Cliff Bland Park as the 2012 DCA recreational softball season gets into full swing. Once again we will be fielding five neighborhood-based recreation co-ed teams [Bondy-Haddonfield-Ridgefield, Ancient Rollin Mountain Quails, Western Darnestown (defending champs), Berryville-Seneca, and Highlanders].

The League is open to adult homeowners/renters within the general Darnestown boundaries. Games are played on Sundays (no games on major "holiday" weekends, e.g., Memorial Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc), in the late-afternoons/early-evenings with the season scheduled from April through July.

As the League begins its 23rd season of play, we continue to look for a few good men and women to bolster each team's roster and give some of our veterans an occasional well deserved rest on the bench. Expanded rosters will also ensure teams have a sufficient lineup on game day to fill the inevitable vacation, children schedule, and occasional lazy Sunday afternoon

holes. No experience is necessary, just a desire to get some fresh air, a little exercise, and have a good time. If interested and need a team assignment, please contact Dave Bivens at dnlbivans34@verizon.net or call (301)-977-4734, and we'll get you signed up; no contract or formal commitment required!

As you read this, hopefully Old Man Winter will be but a memory (maybe even a distant one at that, if this mild winter continues). So dust off your cap, oil that mitt, and loosen up your arm, and come on out and join in the neighborly fun playing or just cheering us on.

It's going, going,

St. Nicholas Church

by the Rev. Ken Howard

What's Happening at St. Nicholas Church? Here are just a few of the things that are happening at St. Nick's that we would like to share.

Lent. By the time you get this update, our Lenten program will be in full swing. Our Lenten program includes:

Special Contemplative Sunday Evening Services at 5:00pm, for those seeking a more meditative experience in this introspective season.

Service Soup and Salad Sunday Suppers at 6:00pm, following our evening services in Lent.

Youth Confirmation Program (Sundays at 6:15pm). Soup and salad, then off to class.

Creating Christian Community (Thursdays at 7:30pm), an adult Lenten book study based on the Rector's book: *Paradoxy: Creating Christian Community Beyond Us and Them* ([available through St. Nick's Amazon store](#)).

Holy Week and Easter (and a Visit from the Bishop of Washington). A visit from the Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, Ninth Bishop of Washington, on Palm Sunday will get our Holy Week off to an extra-special start. Here's what's happening in Holy Week:

- **April 1 (Palm Sunday)**
 - **Palm Sunday Festival Eucharist – Bishop of Washington presiding**

- **5:00pm – Palm Sunday Evening Prayer**
- **April 5 (Maundy Thursday)**
 - **6:30pm – Maundy Thursday Foot Washing, Agape Meal, and Eucharist**
- **April 6 (Good Friday)**
 - **12:00pm – Good Friday Noonday Service**
 - **7:30pm – Good Friday Tenebrae Service (by candlelight)**
- **April 7 (The Eve of Easter)**
 - **7:30pm – The Great Vigil of Easter**
- **April 8 (Easter Sunday: The Feast of the Resurrection)**
 - **9:00am – Easter Sunday Festival Eucharist**
 - **10:00am – Easter Egg Hunt**
 - **11:00am – Easter Sunday Festival Eucharist**
 - **5:00pm – Pascal Vespers Service**

Plans for the May 5, 2012, **Third Annual Darnestown Day** are well underway. Last year Darnestown Day was celebrated at Saint Nicholas' Episcopal Church on Saturday, May 14th. All of us at St. Nick's are hoping that each year Darnestown Day grows and more of our neighbors and friends will participate in this spirited community event.

For more information on these and other activities, visit www.saintnicks.com.

School News & Events

The Butler School

By Diane Long

Butler School began over 40 years ago as one of the first Montessori schools in upper Montgomery County, and several years later, Rilla Spellman, founder and head of school, started Butler Camp. She opened the camp at her home on Seneca Road, where it continued until property was purchased on Germantown Road in the early 1980's. The campus included 22 acres, as well as fields, stables and a large ranch-style "Park House" that was leased from the State of Maryland and bordered on Seneca Creek State Park. The Board of Trustees agreed that it was an ideal spot for their Montessori school and

summer camp, offering expansive outdoor space, fields, woods, creeks, a pond and miles of trails.

Construction began immediately on the first section of the present school building and a pool. Ms. Spellman made sure that the youngest campers (for many years, this included two year olds) could move safely in the shallow end of the pool which is 2 feet deep.

Daily pool time and offering children the opportunity to become swimmers, or improve their swimming skills, has been a regular part of Butler Camp throughout its history - and remains a favorite part of a camper's day.



For nearly 35 years of its history, Butler Camp continued with programs that have always been associated with the summer fun at camp (horseback riding, canoeing, fishing, creeking, hiking, art). In the past 15 years, new activities were added to our programs: ropes course activities, rock climbing, mountain biking, caving, tubing, vaulting on horseback and whitewater rafting. The Butler School campus has a stable, indoor and outdoor riding rings, ropes course and playing fields. For many of the outdoor adventure activities, campers travel to various local recreational spots in the area as well as some in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Many families joined Butler Camp when their children were three and four year olds, attracted to the air-conditioned facilities used by the younger campers, and the programs that are particularly suited for the needs of young children. As their children grew, and siblings joined them, Butler Camp provided a "one stop" camp for the whole family, with the adventure and equestrian programs keeping the older children happy and busy.



Butler Camp will be holding an Open House on March 25, 2:00-4:00 PM, for anyone interested in meeting staff, touring the campus and trying out camp activities with their children. For more information, visit our website at www.butlerschool.org or call 301-977-6600.

Darnestown Elementary School

by Kristen Crook

This winter, DES students have had some great events including the annual Science Fair, Bingo Night and Staff Raffle and Muffins for Moms.

February was a month for giving. DES families contributed to "Share the Love", a healthy snack food drive to support the children at our adopted school, Gaithersburg Elementary. In addition, we held our annual Pennies for Patients fundraiser to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. It's amazing to see how generous our community can be!

Back by popular demand! Our Music and Arts fundraiser will be held on Friday, March 22nd at Northwest High school and will feature a silent auction, music presentations, poetry, a kids activity area and plenty of food for sale.

Tired of paying for bags? DES has recyclable grocery bags for sale for \$3 each. Show your school spirit, raise money for the PTA and help the environment with your purchase! Ask your teacher for an order form.

Upcoming Calendar of events:

Donuts for Dads:	Friday, March 9
Music and Arts:	Thursday, March 22
Spring Break:	April 2-9
Take your Child to Work Day :	April 26
Colonial Day:	Friday, April 20
Talent Show:	Friday, May 11

Our school improvements are moving along nicely! By March, part of the playing field should be open for the kids to play. Also, a decision will be made soon regarding the design of our outdoor classroom that will be located in the courtyard of the renovated area. All of the work should be completed by the fall of 2013.

Have you seen our websites lately? We've updated the school site and the PTA site to bring you more up to date content. Check them out!

School:

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/darnestownes

PTA : www.darnestownPTA.com

Seneca Academy

by Brooke Carroll

Seneca Academy is in the middle of admissions season! We have had several well-attended Open Houses and week-day tours over the past few months. If you are interested in preschool (3 or 4 years old) through 6th grade at a small, independent school with a focus on thinking deeply, interacting positively, and communicating effectively, now is the time to contact us!

In addition, Seneca Academy is busily preparing for the warmer summer months and camp. We welcome all community members to join in the fun at Seneca Summer Camps! This summer our youngest campers (ages 3 through rising kindergarteners) will participate in *Passport to the World Camp*. Held from 9am to 1:30pm, this camp allows campers to explore different countries around the world through stories, art, games, and with in-camp "field trips"! This fits in beautifully with our global focus as we get closer to our authorization as an *International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program*.

Our older campers (rising 1st graders through rising 6th graders, or rising 8th graders for Film/Theater and Band camps) have several camps to choose from including *Art and Adventure*, *Computer Programming and Adventure*, *Mad Science® and Adventure*, *Band and Adventure*, and *Film Making/Theater and Adventure*. Adventure camps are held from 9am-3:30pm. Campers will engage in their chosen activities for half the day at Seneca Academy, and will take the school bus on adventures around the county for the other half of the day. There are a variety of adventures planned for all! In addition, we are partnering with Harrington's Sports and Adventure Camp to offer a 2-week full-day adventure camp!

Camp begins June 18th and runs through July 27th. More information and applications can be found on our website www.SenecaAcademy.org or by calling our office at 301-869-3728. Hope to see you at camp!

Thomas Jefferson Preparatory

by Ruth Brasch

The next few months at the Thomas Jefferson Preparatory School are filled with fun and interesting activities. Our annual Dinner and Talent Show is

scheduled for February 7th. The students, as well as the faculty and staff, enjoy showcasing their extraordinary talent while the parents and families relax and enjoy a wonderful homemade dinner. The theme this year is Une Soirée Enchantée.

In March, the third through eighth grade students have been invited to visit the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division. This day will be filled with interesting activities teaching the children about models and testing. I am sure this will be a very memorable day for both the teachers and students!

The Middle School students are continuing their community service with monthly visits to enjoy the company of their new friends at the Winter Growth Assisted Living Facility in Olney, Maryland. The students continue to learn many valuable lessons from this experience.

TJP also has planned activities for our families and the community. Mark your calendar for Friday, May 4, for our annual Mayfair. This evening will provide crafts, rides, music, food and fun for the entire family. Please come out and bring your neighbors.

TJP is currently enrolling students for the 2012/2013 school year. We invite you to visit the school or attend one of our Open Houses on March 11th and April 22nd between 3 and 5 pm. The TJP website (tjprep.org) is full of information about the school. Feel free to call the school office at 301-330-7550 for additional information or to schedule a private tour.

Editorials from You

Regarding Safety

I'm writing this letter in the hope that some or all of it is suitable for publication in "The Little Acorn".

I am a retired pediatrician who still has an interest in the health and well being of children of all ages. Daily, I walk my 2 dogs in the Bondbrook and Haddonfield developments and regularly drive along Darnestown Road. In so doing I frequently see pedestrians walking and jogging on the right hand side of the road—in the space legally allotted to vehicles—including bicycles.



I learned as a young child that the safe way to walk on a street which had no sidewalk (and how these two developments got built and approved by the county with no sidewalks amazes me) was to walk on the left hand side of the road. This way, one faces the oncoming traffic which will pass closer to one as compared with traffic overtaking one on the right hand side of the road. In recent weeks I have stopped to point this out both to some children and a few adults who told me that they had never been taught the above. I learned this in elementary school and in Cub Scouts. I am surprised that this no longer seems to be taught as a life skill.

Thank you for your attention.

Charles S. August, MD
13403 Pulver Place

Appreciation

I want to thank the DCA for their swift action recently to assist with getting a water overflow problem on Black Rock Road resolved. Living on Black Rock Road, we've had an issue for several years now with a natural runoff overflowing onto the road on the east side of the creek. In winter this freezes over and has been treacherous and caused some car accidents. In particular I want to thank Dick Jurgena, Bob Thompson, and Lisa Patterson. Through their perseverance this was fixed by the state within several weeks.

This is just one example of the value of our DCA. This past summer there was a power surge on Black Rock that caused many thousands of dollars worth of damage to several houses. Through their relationship with the County the DCA helped give this some executive-level visibility within PEPCO and at least one of the neighbors has been able to get a commitment from PEPCO to cover their insurance deductible.

The value of our civic association isn't just that we have great people who act swiftly, but when they act and when they speak the County and the state listen. The DCA has built a stellar reputation over the past four decades and has developed strong relationships at all levels so that when Darnestown needs to be heard, it is.

I've run into a few residents over the years who have questioned the value of the DCA, and I think only 60% of our households are paid members. Though not as active now, I am a former President and active Board

Member, so I am admittedly biased towards to the DCA. But I am also informed, and I know the multitude of large and small issues the DCA takes on, many of which Darnestown residents benefit from, yet never know about.

Why are the parking spots at the Harris Teeter oversized and comfortable? Why do we have a flag pole monopole instead of a steel monster twice its size? How is it we're getting County funding for a new town park developed next to the Harris Teeter? And how is it with all the development pressures we've been able to protect ourselves in every Master Plan and aren't an overdeveloped Germantown or Clarksburg?

Whether it's helping neighbors with smaller issues like water runoff and power surges, or consistently engaging in the larger issues to protect the town - like zoning and development review, road studies, and spending countless hours at every Master Plan to make sure Darnestown remains the rural place we all moved to - the DCA remains active and vigilant. As someone who grew up in Darnestown and is now raising kids of my own here, thank you.

Scott Mostrom

From our Past

In doing research for a Graduate class, I stumbled upon The Little Acorn and my heart was drawn to my childhood home. My mother, Edith Fitzgerald was the editor for The Little Acorn in the 70's and I have vivid memories of driving through the streets of Darnestown, helping Mom deliver the community newsletter to our neighbors.

Darnestown was an iconic place to spend my childhood years and it's encouraging to see that the same traditions, (ie: the Hoe Down @ Smokey Glen & Christmas Tree lighting) that drew neighbors and friends together are still weaved into the fabric of the community.

I had the privilege of visiting my childhood home on Wye Oak Drive two years ago and the same family who purchased the home from my parents still live there with their children. They made some wonderful renovations while maintaining the original character of the home. I imagine their family of four have much more elbow (and bathroom) space than we had with nine!

Thank you for keeping what made Darnestown special alive for this generation and a precious memory for those of us who have moved away.

Sincerely,

Karen Kordon (Fitzgerald)

DCA 2012 Membership!!

So far, 586 Darnestown residents have renewed their membership this year. Are you one of them? – Or have you simply put off sending in your check?

Annual memberships are only \$25.

The DCA publishes your *Little Acorn*, provides community and social opportunities, and works hard to help protect our “country” way of life in Darnestown, thanks to many dedicated volunteers.

Can we count on you to help??

Newcomer's Corner

Gaithersburg Area Newcomers Club

by Lynda Slesinger

Expand social connections and make new friends... The Gaithersburg Area Newcomers Club welcomes *new residents* and those in *life transition* (lifestyle changes, retirement, etc.). We offer an extensive variety of fun social activities. For more information or to receive a Newsletter, contact DCA Member Lynda Slesinger at 301-990-1067.

Information for Newcomers

If you are a new resident of Darnestown, welcome to our neighborhood! The information in this section should be helpful and will introduce you to some things that give Darnestown a sense of community.

The Darnestown Civic Association, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation originally formed in 1967, which represents the interests of Darnestown area residents in all matters

pertaining to the welfare of Darnestown and its residents. The general purposes of the DCA are explained in its bylaws and Articles of Incorporation. Payment of annual dues (\$25 per individual or family) enables you to vote on issues during Town Meetings.

The membership year of the DCA is January 1 through December 31, and annual dues billing statements are mailed out in October or November each year, although dues may be paid any time during a given year. Current officers of the DCA are listed on Page 2 of *The Little Acorn*.

Mailing Address:

Darnestown Civic Association
14132B Darnestown Road
Darnestown, MD 20874

Boundaries: Since Darnestown is not incorporated, it has no official boundaries. The activities and focus of the DCA include an area of some 12 square miles, centered approximately at the intersection of Maryland Routes 28 and 112 (Darnestown Road and Seneca Road). Maps are available at Town Meetings.

The Little Acorn newsletter is published quarterly, in March, June, September and December. Its name derives from its origin as a tiny newsletter in the Ancient Oak subdivision more than 20 years ago. Now it is mailed (3rd class) to every residential address that we have in our DCA data base. Volunteers, based on information from membership remittance form, maintain this name and address file. The newsletter should arrive in your mailbox early in each of the above months. If you don't receive an issue, please contact the editor or any DCA officer. Publication of *The Little Acorn* is entirely a volunteer effort except for the printing and mailing.

Town Meetings are held quarterly by the DCA, usually on the 2nd or 3rd Thursday of March, June, September and December in the Fellowship Hall of the Darnestown Presbyterian Church at the intersection of Route 28 and Turkey Foot Road. Meetings are scheduled for 7:30 p.m., but are not called to order until 7:45 to allow some time for meeting neighbors, etc. Each issue of *The Little Acorn* features an announcement about the upcoming Town Meeting.

Annual Meeting and Election of DCA Officers coincide with the Town Meeting in June. Nominations are announced in June edition of *The Little Acorn* in advance of the Annual Meeting in accordance with the bylaws of the GDCA.

Telephone Directory: Every two years, the DCA publishes a directory of residents' names, addresses and phone numbers and mails it to every residential address in our database. To obtain a copy of the Directory, call Sarah



Scherer at 240-683-8533 or sarahscherer@comcast.net. They are only available while supplies last.

Organizations, Clubs, Groups, PTAs, etc., provide much of the social interaction that give any area a sense of community. Below are many of Darnestown's:

Barnesville School
21830 Peach Tree Road
Barnesville, MD 20838
John Huber, Head of School
301-972-0341

Boy Scout Troop 1094
Scoutmaster Bud Wildman
301-990-8318

Brownies and Junior Girl Scouts
Cathy Sharpe
301-519-9520

Butler School
15951 Germantown Road
Beckie Hardie, Head of School
301-977-6600

Circle School/Seneca Academy
15601 Germantown Road
Darnestown, MD 20874
Brooke Carroll, Head of School
301-869-3728

Darne Bloomers Garden Club
Sandy Hribar, President
Betsy Kingman, Membership
301-921-1988

Darnestown Civic Association
14100 Darnestown Road, Darnestown, MD 20874
Lisa Patterson-Troike, President
301-548-0999

Darnestown Elementary School
15030 Turkey Foot Road, Darnestown, MD 20878
Laura Colgary, Principal
301-840-7157

Darnestown Swim and Racquet Club
P. O. Box 3574, Darnestown, MD 20885
Jeannie Tucker, Membership
(Jeannietucker@aol.com)

Jones Lane Elementary School
15110 Jones Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Carole Sample, Principal
301-840-8160

Lakelands Park Middle School
1200 Main Street, Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Deborah Higdon, Principal
301-670-1400

Mary of Nazareth School
14131 Seneca Road, Darnestown, MD 20874
Michael J. Friel, Principal
301-869-0940

Quince Orchard Community Library
Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878
240-777-0200

Northwest High School
12501 Richter Farm Road, Germantown, MD 20874
Lance Dempsey, Principal
301-601-4660

Quince Orchard High School
15800 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Ms. Carole Working, Principal
301-840-4686

Ridgeview Middle School
16600 Raven Rock Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Dr. Carol Levine, Principal
301-840-4770

Thomas Jefferson Preparatory
12801 Darnestown Road, Darnestown, Maryland 20878
Zorianna Harabatch, Head of School
301-330-7550, www.tjprep.org

Trout Unlimited
Seneca Valley Chapter, #369
website: <http://senecavalleytu.org/>
Charles August (csaugust@comcast.net), Secretary
240-401-8669

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

May 1, 2012

The deadlines will remain firm.

Articles for *The Little Acorn* may be mailed to
14132B Darnestown Road, Darnestown,
MD 20874 OR emailed to
acorneditor2@gmail.com.

Please follow-up by phone or email to confirm receipt.

The editor can be reached at 240-383-9146.

DCA Spring Social

A Darnestown Community Meet-Your-Neighbors Reception

at
Smokey Glen Farm

Wednesday, May 9, 2012
6pm-8pm

Serving their world famous barbeque fare
with all the trimmings

RESERVATIONS WITH PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 30TH!

SEND CHECKS MADE OUT TO DCA TO:

LISA PATTERSON, 13925 ESWORTHY ROAD, DARNESTOWN, MD 20874

Please list full names of those attending.

Nametags will be awaiting you at the door and will serve as your ticket.

Full names of those in your group : _____

adults @ \$15 each _____

children 3-11 yrs old @ \$10 each _____

Children under 3 free! _____

Phone # _____ Enclosed \$ _____

****NO REFUNDS** PAYMENT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AT THE DOOR!**

Darnestown Civic Association, Inc.

14132B Darnestown Road
Darnestown, MD 20874

dca@darnestowncivic.org

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A cup of joe and a Acorn,
Life is sweet.



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14801 SPRINGFIELD RD
DARNESTOWN MD 20874-3419