



THE DARNESTOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
[www.darnestowncivic.org](http://www.darnestowncivic.org)

Volume 50, Number 4  
December 2013

## CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWS & NOTES

### Notes From the President *by Lisa Patterson-Troike*

Hello and Happy Holidays! The DCA has started its 2014 membership drive and mailed out a letter to all Darnestown residents back in November asking for your support. Without you, we wouldn't be able to do all that we do. Thanks for your support!

### DCA/MCPD Partnership

The DCA is working on partnering with the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD). On October 30, 2013 Dick Jurgena, Matt Quinn, Kevin Keegan, Susan Allaway and myself met with MCPD Commander Fenner and four of his associates at their new headquarters. The DCA has requested the following from MCPD: notification of any violent/dangerous crime in/near our community within 48 hours, notification of any crime trend within 48 hours, and disclosure

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### DARNESTOWN TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY!

**Sunday, December 15th**  
**6:30 pm**  
*Darnestown Heritage Park*

### Next DCA Town Meeting

**December 12th | 7:30 pm**

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

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## *We're in the process of updating our Service Provider List for 2014!*

- Babysitters
- Mother's Helpers
- Petsitters
- House sitters
- Music Teachers
- Notary Services
- Tutors

Please send in your listings  
to Little Acorn Editor,  
Tanya Slesinger at  
acorneditor@yahoo.com.

**An updated list will be  
printed in the  
March 2014 issue.**



## **Chestnut Oak Drive Preliminary Plan Application Status**

*By Pam DuBois*

The Darnestown Civic Association (DCA) submitted a letter and testimony opposing a preliminary plan recently submitted for the re-subdivision of the three acre Huang parcel into three residential lots located on the west side of Chestnut Oak Drive at the intersection with Darnestown Road. Details of our submission are consolidated into this article as follows.

The preliminary plan proposes three lots that are each exactly one acre in size and are to be accessed off Chestnut Oak Drive via a shared driveway. The property is zoned R-200 so three lots are permissible, but private septic systems are required (county sewer service is not available). While the DCA recognizes that these three lots are permissible by zoning, the DCA opposes the three lot preliminary plan based on specific lot dimensions that are not in keeping with adjoining properties.

According to the Montgomery County Code Chapter 50, Article 29 on Lot Design, item a.1) on Lot Dimensions states: "The lot size, width, shape and orientation shall be appropriate for the location of the subdivision." The DCA wishes to comment on lot size and orientation in addition to the neighborhood delineation which forms the basis of comparison.

### **Neighborhood Delineation**

The DCA's analysis defines the neighborhood as those lots most impacted by the subdivision of this property, that being 18 of the most proximate lots to the subject site along Chestnut Oak Drive. The evaluation of these lots with the proposed subject property results in non-compliance with Chapter

50, Article 29 on Lot Design. Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) Staff selected 19 lots as their basis for evaluation in which the subject property complies with the above referenced lot subdivision criteria. Which basis of comparison is more appropriate? The DCA selected all lots along Chestnut Oak Drive suggesting that more emphasis should be given to these lots than lots located on other streets further afield and with different characteristics. The DCA argues that the 19 lots selected as the neighborhood forming the basis of evaluation to the subject lot is flawed for the following reasons:

- The DCA would like to suggest that a neighborhood is a specific geographic area that has social dynamics whereby there is considerable face-to-face interaction among members (i.e. walking the dog on the street, getting the mail, going for a run, etc.). Homeowners on Chestnut Oak Drive will associate more with others on their street than with homeowners on Darnestown Road. Therefore, the majority of lots that comprise the basis for lot subdivision evaluation should be on Chestnut Oak Drive and not on Darnestown Road.
- Homes on Darnestown Road do not comprise a neighborhood and there is a lack of continuity of housing types (variety of houses built at different times on different sized lots). Most of the homes along Chestnut Oak were built as part of a subdivision prior to the 1980s (1967-1978) creating a street character that should be maintained. Therefore, more evaluation emphasis should be given to lots on Chestnut Oak Drive.
- Thirteen of MNCPPC's 19 selected lots are all accessed off a Major Highway, Darnestown Road / Route 28, where as ingress and egress for the subject property is on Chestnut Oak Drive.

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*Notes From the President*  
*Continued from Page 1*

of pertinent crime information that would not negatively effect an ongoing investigation, i.e., suspect/vehicle descriptions, etc.

Several things prompted this meeting: 1) The incidents on Jones Lane in spring of 2012. The DCA was alerted about a resident who had been rear ended and followed early one morning, driving home on Jones Lane. The DCA discovered that another victim had experienced the same incident, but pulled over to exchange insurance information, and was kidnapped. He was taken to several ATMs to withdraw money, and subsequently beaten. The DCA proceeded to alert the media and contacted police asking why the community hadn't been alerted to these crimes. Shortly thereafter, the police issued a press release. 2) The four attempted abductions/harassment incidents occurring in and around Darnestown the past few months. 3) The current rash of thefts/robberies/burglaries. 4) The online MCPD crime reports are two weeks behind.

MCPD suggested that Darnestown residents document and photograph valuable items and serial numbers of electronic equipment. If personal property is stolen, this will aid MCPD in identification and recovery of articles. The most recent trend is entry into the house through the lowest level. MCPD has indicated that fortifying all basement openings, windows and doors may help dissuade an intruder.

Our website states that the DCA "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." Safety is a prior-

ity and the DCA is working very hard to provide the community with timely and substantive information to help you avoid becoming a victim and reactive measures to assist those who have been victimized.

### **Lost & Found Horse Rescue**



I attended an open house on October 20th at the Lost & Found Horse Rescue (LFHR) located at Ithaca Farm, 15800 Darnestown Road, right here in Darnestown! LFHR was founded in 1999 by Robert and Mary Truland and is a 501(c)3 non-profit "dedicated to rescuing equines from abuse, neglect and slaughter. Through the program, these animals are cared for, rehabilitated, retrained, and placed in new homes." LFHR has 20-30 horses, 15-30 donkeys, 4 miniature mules, goats and sheep. The Trulands generously donated part of their beautiful property for LFHR to operate on. I was thoroughly impressed with the caregivers and facilities and enjoyed meeting several of the four legged residents. The open house had several educational programs, such as well known horse trainer Tony Eyler restarting an older horse and "skeleton in motion" with equine anatomy drawn in chalk on an actual horse. Tours, pony rides, "paint your own horse shoe", and a silent auction rounded out the activities. LFHR is always looking for volunteers to help with anything from mucking stalls to riding horses. To find out more, visit [www.lfhrmaryland.org](http://www.lfhrmaryland.org).





## Hoedown Lowdown



The 43rd annual DCA Hoedown at Smokey Glen, here in Darnestown on Riffleford Road, was a success! Approximately 150 cowboys and cowgirls took part in the festivities and brought home many memories. Mac McCall and his wife of 58 years, Phyllis, assisted our group with learning simple steps to get around the dance floor. Mac began calling back in 1974 and still needs to be booked a year in advance today. Many of the Hoedowners were clad in plaid shirts, blue jeans, cowboy hats, boots and bandanas. Some even had play pistols and sheriff badges. It was a beautiful autumn evening and the hayrides in the dark went off without a hitch. Good fun and good food with good friends, makes for a Darne' good time had by all!

## Annual Tree Lighting

The DCA Annual Tree Lighting will take place at 6:30 pm on Sunday, December 15th at Darnestown's Heritage Park next to Harris Teeter. Once again, I mailed a letter to Santa Claus at the North Pole to see if he is able to "fly" in for our celebration. I know this is his busiest time of the year, but reminded him that there would be many smiling children and lots of hot cocoa and cookies, to make it worth his while. People of all ages are invited to join us for this special gathering -- Come one, come all!

## It's a Darne' Good Cookbook

DCA cookbooks are now \$10! This is a deal considering some retailers sell them for over \$20. The recipes and art work are all contributions from our residents. They make a great hostess and/or holiday gift. Contact me at [lisaapatterson@aol.com](mailto:lisaapatterson@aol.com) to get yours today!

## Egg Nog Cake

*Yield: Three 9-inch round layers*

1 box yellow cake mix	3 eggs
1 cup canned eggnog	1 teaspoon rum extract
¼ cup vegetable oil	¼ teaspoon nutmeg

1. With electric mixer, beat all cake ingredients at medium speed for three minutes
2. Pour into three greased and lightly floured 9-inch round pans
3. Bake for 20 minutes at 350 degrees
4. Add frosting on top and between cake layers

*The DCA wishes you and yours a Magical Holiday Season and Happy New Year!*

## Seeking Bridge Players

*We are a group of ladies in Darnestown who play bridge on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. It is a very informal group, low intensity, and definitely not duplicate bridge. Over the years our list of subs has grown short. We often need someone to play for a missing "regular", almost monthly. If you are interested in being a substitute, please contact Karen Hazzard at 301-869-4258. It is a great way to hone those bridge skills you might not have used since college in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.*

*There is also a group of couples that play "party bridge" the 2nd Saturday of the month. They are also looking for couples to be on their sub list. Interested couples should contact Kathy Kluk at 301-977-3356.*



## DCA Related News & Reports by Arthur Slesinger

### Reliable Utility Committee

In July PEPCO was granted part of its request for increased power distribution cost. The Public Service Commission granted PEPCO \$28 million in rate increases starting in July which is about a 2% increase in their charges. The PSC also allowed a \$12 million rate increase for hardening of certain feeders as an element in their Grid Resiliency effort with that increase to begin January 2014. The latter was part of the Maryland Department of Energy task force recommendations on improving the strength of the power distribution system. In doing so PSC rejected about half of the original \$60 million request. Several other grid resiliency charges were also rejected. The County is appealing the PSC decision.

Just a note on utility cost. The State allows you to choose from whom you purchase your gas and electricity. Periodically you probably receive mailings from alternate suppliers. These offers are genuine as the costs to provide the utility are separate from the cost to deliver the utility. PEPCO and Washington Gas are the providers of last resort, they provide as well as deliver the product if you make no selection otherwise. If you go on the PSC website there is a list of approved alternate suppliers. Most of the time you will get lower unit charges than the standard rate. It is mindless in that you will still get a bill from PEPCO or Washington Gas, but the provider portion will be forwarded to your selected company. If your provider were to vanish, PEPCO and Washington Gas are obligated to immediately provide you with service. One word of caution, be aware of the cancellation fee, if any, from an alternate

supplier. If gas or electric costs were to drop dramatically, and you wanted to take advantage of the price drop, you may be contractually bound to the alternate supplier for a cancellation fee. My experience is there are true savings to be had if you spend the time to shop around.

### Environmental Quality



The local streams that go through and around Darnestown, mainly Seneca Creek and Muddy Branch, are the subject of a study by the WSSC to determine if the sewer lines are being infiltrated by clean water, or are leaking sewage (exfiltration) into the water body. These studies are part of settlement between the EPA and WSSC to better understand the state of the sewer lines across the WSSC territory. As Darnestown is in an area with relatively new growth, our lines are in much better condition than the older lines down county. Twice a year the water in the streams is sampled and compared to previous findings to determine if the water quality is deteriorating. The majority of the analysis revolved around bacteria in the water and those bacteria that come from warm blooded animals.

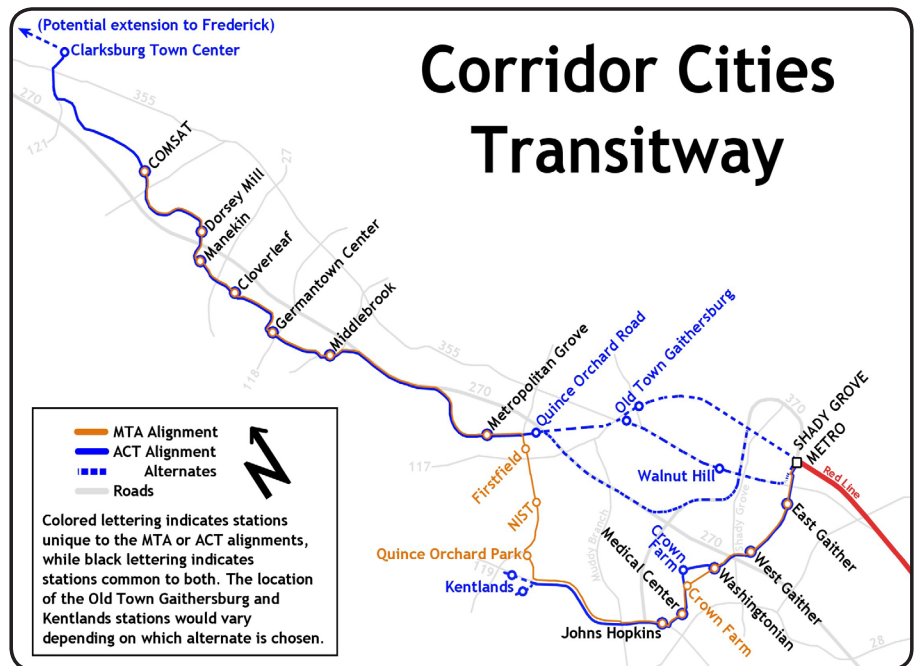


The significant news is that with DNA testing, the WSSC effort is able to determine the source of the bacteria in the water. The levels are not good, the water quality is considered poor. But what is truly news is that the vast majority of the bacteria in the water are not from man, or deer, but rather it is avian. Who knew? For reasons unclear, the fall analysis shows dramatically higher levels than the spring time samples. This could be a temperature effect, a water flow effect or some other unknown reason.

WSSC is planning to reposition some sewer lines and correct damaged manhole connections. By 2015 the construction is supposed to be finished such that less storm water gets into the sewer lines. This will help lower the hydraulic load on the sewage treatment plant in the District. Most of MoCo sewage goes to the Blue Plains treatment plant there.

Bottom line is the local water quality is not great. The local streams are still heavily impacted by storm water runoff. These storm surges erode the banks, scour the bottom and produce a water body that can support little wildlife. Government agencies, federal, state and local, attempt to mitigate this damage by collecting the water or diverting the water to slow down the velocity. Your home owner's tax is supposed to go to programs that monitor and control the storm water quality entering these local streams. If you desire more information, please contact the writer at [art.slesinger@comcast.net](mailto:art.slesinger@comcast.net).

## Transportation Update on the CCT



The State and County effort to build the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) got an infusion of cash from the Governor via the elevated gas tax. The CCT outreach meeting was held October 30 and the details of the first 9 miles of the 16 mile rapid bus system were provided. The project is estimated to cost \$560 million (2 year old number) and in excess of \$40 million per year to operate. Darnestown folks need to understand some of the fine details.

The system is really not designed for terminus to terminus riders. The circuitous path from COMSAT to Shady Grove is, in theory, designed to deliver people to points of activity in the up county area. Hence the commuter going from up county to Shady Grove Metro is more likely to drive 20 minutes to Shady Grove than take the 40 minute ride around the 9 mile loop. There is NO PARKING at the stations except for COM-

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## HOEDOWN LOWDOWN!





*Transportation Update on the CCT*  
*Continued from Page 7*

SAT. The CCT will never be supported by the optimistic 36,000 trips per day forecast. The State is expected to subsidize the system. Most riders will have to walk to the stations.

The proposed system is a rapid bus variety. These are 60 foot long articulated buses with automated stations and travel on a dedicated, 2 lane road that parallels major current roads. Most of the crossings will be at grade, guarded affairs. Several crossing will be elevated, including those across route 270 and the MARC tracks. Where the system shares current roads, the traffic signals will be controlled to give the CCT first priority when the light changes, which effectively lowers the capacity of the current road. Most importantly a \$50 million tunnel under Key West Highway was removed and it is now an at grade, DIAGONAL crossing. This means all traffic stops in both directions to let the trolley through. The CCT is planned to run at 6 minute intervals. Key West will congeal to a crawl during rush hours with this option.

A note about current road issues and the CCT project. The CCT will come out of Belward Farm and travel along Muddy Branch and cross Muddy Branch at the Great Seneca Highway intersection. The next intersection, Sam Eig and Great Seneca is already a troubled intersection. With about 6000 new residential units coming now at Crown, as well as along Key West opposite the 2 new NIH buildings, and more at PSTA facility, the immediate road issues are well beyond serious. Unfortunately the Muddy Branch intersection on Great Seneca is too close to the Sam Eig crossing so a massive amount of Gaithersburg real estate will have to be consumed to correct this mess. Add a CCT crossing there and one

wonders if this is wise. Great Seneca is a State road, so MoCo has to kick the issue to Annapolis. Bottom line, the State is already cash short for highways, the CCT plan will really complicate the issue and most of us will be deceased before they figure out how to fix the mess and where to get the money. If you ever talk to a State delegate or a County Council representative, you should strongly raise the issue of this blind approach to transportation planning.

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## COMMUNITY INTEREST

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**Those Who Serve**  
*by Madeline D'Alessio*  
[home.dalessio@gmail.com](mailto:home.dalessio@gmail.com)

Simon Youngblut graduated from Captains school at Fort Gordon and was selected for the project warrior program. The program takes the top 10% of Army Captains and assigns them to be the future trainers for their Army specialty. As part of this program Simon has been assigned to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

Hannah Youngblut has transferred from Fort Gordon, GA to Fort Carson in Colorado Springs, CO. She is presently on Temporary duty at Fort Irwin to support the units training before they deploy to Afghanistan at the beginning of the New Year.

Captain Ryan Swisher, U. S. Army, recently completed Pathfinder school where he graduated first in his class. He currently serves as the company commander of Apache Troop of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment in Ft. Hood Texas.



## See Something...Hear Something... Say Something! by Matt Quinn

The Darnestown Civic Association (DCA) wishes to thank the Darnestown community for their overwhelming response to DCA's recent e-blast regarding public safety concerns, including a rash of burglaries and several alarming reports of suspicious persons pursuing children in our local neighborhoods. The volume of responses received from the community has significantly helped DCA and County police to exchange crime related information in a more proficient manner.

During DCA's recent discussions with Montgomery County Police Captain James Fenner, DCA was pleased to learn that police are making progress in their investigations of a variety of crimes committed in/around Darnestown, most specifically last year's violent abduction which occurred near Jones Lane, and also the most recent rash of residential burglaries. However, to DCA's curiosity and concern, DCA became aware of instances where police were dispatched for in-progress calls and other serious calls for service in the Darnestown area, but the police reports are not on file.

To confirm whether your crime and/or suspicious persons related call for police service (during 2013), is on file and available to assist the police in their investigation, please contact the police at the soonest. Also, please consider requesting/reviewing a copy of the report pertaining to your 2013 call for police service. Please refer to the below guidance to assist in ascertaining whether your report is on file and also to obtain a copy for your review:

- In your capacity as the complainant, please call County Police Records Office in Gaithersburg, MD at 240-773-5330 (for all non-accident related reports);
- Provide either the police report number or in the absence of a report number, provide your name, along with the address and approximate date where the police responded to your call;
- In the event you are advised that there is no police report on file or upon your review of the report it appears the police report is missing investigative information you believe to be of value to the police...please contact Captain Fenner directly at e-mail address: [james.fenner@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:james.fenner@montgomerycountymd.gov), to arrange for either the initial filing of your report or the filing of an amended report, as is necessary;
- In addition, please also provide a courtesy notification to DCA at e-mail address: [safety@darnestowncivic.org](mailto:safety@darnestowncivic.org), regarding either the initial or amended filing of your police report.

Once again, thank you Darnestown for the timely responses to DCA's requests for your invaluable participation regarding public safety issues confronting our community. Remember, when you see something, or hear something it is vitally important that you say something by promptly calling the police via either the crime-in-progress emergency 9-1-1 number or the non-emergency number 301-279-8000. *It is through your eyes, your ears and your voice that we as a community collectively demonstrate our commitment and determination to actively partner with the police.* In the interest of our community, among DCA's primary objectives is to create a safe environment for all who live, visit and work in Dar-



## **Darnestown Swim and Racquet Club Summer Camp!**

*By Janet Swisher*

Darnestown Swim and Racquet Club, DSRC, is a nonprofit, member-owned swim and racquet club. The club is located on Spring Meadows Drive about a mile west of Darnestown Road (Route 28).

DSRC's Summer Camp is exclusive to club members only. The camp is run by our very own professional camp counselor, Zina Harabatch. The camp is designed for ages 6 to 12 years old. Zina has years of experience designing, organizing, and managing youth camp operations. DSRC Summer Camp is full of aquatic and multi sport adventures. Fitness is an essential part of a healthy childhood and we thrive on having an active body and mind. Campers will learn healthy habits as well as improve on their small and large motor skills. There will be a wide variety of agility courses, speed, relays, tournaments and much more!

The camp specializes in land and water activities to include: tennis, pool games, crafts, music and other outdoor activities. Visit [www.dsclub.com](http://www.dsclub.com) for registration details or for more information contact Zina Harabatch at [DSRC.Zina@gmail.com](mailto:DSRC.Zina@gmail.com).

DSRC draws its membership from families in the greater Darnestown area. Because the club has a limited number of members, the atmosphere is one of friendliness and relaxation. Families can swim in the spacious pool, play tennis on one of six lighted courts, or relax with a picnic under the trees. DSRC offers a variety of social and sports activities and programs for children, teens and adults.

If you or anyone you know are interested in joining DSRC please visit us online at [www.dsclub.com](http://www.dsclub.com) where you can download and fill out our membership application. If you have questions, please contact our Membership Director, Bonnie Lane at [BonnieLLane@yahoo.com](mailto:BonnieLLane@yahoo.com) or 240-683-8206. We will be continuing our "refer a friend" program. Any member who brings in a friend or neighbor as a new member will receive a \$100 check from the club in return for their recommendation.

"Like" the Darnestown Swim & Racquet Club Facebook Page so you can keep up with us online!

### **DSRC SUMMER CAMP**

*June 16 – August 8, 2014*

#### **HOURS**

M-F 9:00am to 4:30pm

#### **COSTS**

Full Day Program:  
\$235 per camper/weekly

Half Day Program:  
\$120 per camper/weekly

#### **REGISTRATION**

[DSRC.Zina@gmail.com](mailto:DSRC.Zina@gmail.com)





## Darne Bloomers Garden Club

By Merikay Smith



In September the Darne Bloomers challenged designer Lynni Megginson's creativity in using a random selection of florist



and garden flowers as well as household items and vegetables to create beautiful table scapes (photos above by Susan Allaway). Imagine her surprise and our delight as Lynni opened containers of items pre-selected by club hosts and with all of us watching she explained the process of creating colorful, coherent designs from diverse natural and manmade objects. Lynni specializes in upscale interior design and is principal designer for L&M Designs. The table decorations and food presentation created by the hosts (Susan Allaway, Louise Evans, Becky Hanley and Tonya Jones) exemplified the creative use of garden flowers and "found" objects with spray-painted filigree frames on black and white checked tablecloths set with bouquets of white and limelight hydrangeas, magnolia blooms, and white blooming clematis.

Despite a cool rain, our intrepid Bloomers traveled on October 10 to tour the Black Ankle Winery set in the lovely rolling hills of nearby Mount Airy. The local wine produced here by proprietors Sarah O'Herron and Edward Boyce compares favorably to the finest of Europe. Tours are available to the public every Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting. Those reservations are required for groups of 8 or more. After purchasing the Black Ankle farm of

145 acres, planting of grapes began in 2003 and 2004 and now extends to 42+ acres of red and white grape varieties. Our group met with owner Edward Boyce. The scenery was beautiful despite gloomy weather. And the warm fire burning and blankets in the rustic wine tasting room were a welcome antidote to the cold. Our group was

able to taste five wines: a white wine which had sold out and was provided by one of our group, three red wines, and a sweet dessert wine.

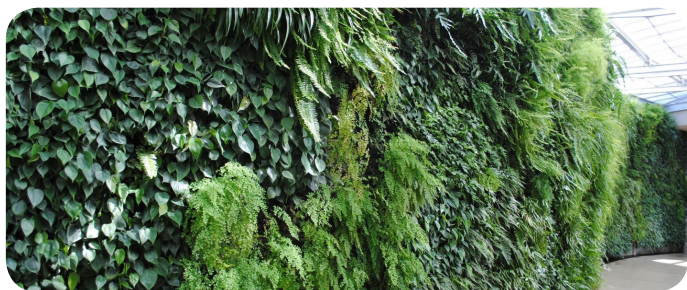
Touring the winery reminds us that we home gardeners can grow wine grapes on a more modest scale to enjoy drinking. Both seed and seedless table grapes can be grown at home as well. Growing wine grapes (*Vitis vinifera*) requires special knowledge of site requirements, pruning and pest management. The wine grapes are more difficult to cultivate than table grapes, which are good even when not fully ripe and are more cold-hardy and less susceptible to black rot than wine grapes. Wine grapes that can be successfully grown at home include: Chardonnay (only good sites), Vidal Blanc, Seyval Blanc, Cabernet Franc (only good sites), Chambourcin, and Foch. The above information is from the



website: [www.extension.umd.edu/growit/fruit-profiles/grape](http://www.extension.umd.edu/growit/fruit-profiles/grape). More extensive information on viticulture (grape growing) and winemaking is available from Maryland Extension Specialist, Dr. Joseph Fiola, who is working to support and increase the wine making industry in Maryland.

In November we will learn about building a living wall indoors from Ruth Kassinger, author of *Paradise Under Glass*. She is also the award-winning author of eight science and history books for young adults. Her newest book, *A Garden of Marvels: How We Discovered the Flowers Have Sex, Leaves Eat Air, and Other Secrets of Plants*, will be out in February 2014.

Ruth Kassinger built a small conservatory and living wall in her Chevy Chase home and will share her insights and experiences with us. A spectacular example of a living wall can be seen at the Longwood Garden conservatory (see photo, Merikay Smith). Lisa Carothers, Fon MacLauchlan, LeeAnne Gelletly and Barbara Marx are November's hosts.



The Darne Bloomers Garden Club meets on the second Thursday of the month with breakfast at 9 a.m. followed by a business meeting and speaker. Most meetings are held at the Darnestown Presbyterian Church. Visitors are welcome but should contact the club president, Becky Hanley, in advance of the meeting.

## Flags by Lisa Patterson-Troiike

Have you ever wondered who is responsible for putting up the beautiful American flags on the telephone poles in Darnestown every Memorial Day, Flag Day, 4th of July, Labor Day and Veteran's Day? For over 16 years, Jim and Carol Clifford have volunteered their time repairing, ordering, placing, removing and storing the flags, as well as, repairing and replacing the flag brackets. They planned their holiday vacations so that the flags would go up and come down in a timely manner. It took them approximately 1 hour to complete the task of putting up/taking down 60 flags. Carol drove the car with the flags and Jim walked, with ladder in hand, to each pole. They "felt strongly that we owed it to the Darnestown community to provide this service and it is a wonderful way to express your patriotism and help Darnestown be defined as a place to be proud of. Given that our children had the benefit of growing up in such a wonderful environment, it was the least we could do." The Cliffords lived in the Ancient Oak community of Darnestown for 17 years and moved to Poolesville in 2001. They still call Darnestown "home". The DCA thanks the Clifford's for their flag service to the Darnestown Community and welcomes the new "flag man", Tim Sanders!





## Local Bikers Rally to Support US Veterans During the Government Shutdown

*By Susie Gooch & Joe Hitchcock*



During the recent government shut-down, the WWII Memorial had been barricaded, the fountains had been shut off, and Park Police were not permitting visiting WWII veterans into the memorial. This was the case with all of the memorials in DC during the shut-down, but turning away 90-year old Honor Flight WWII veterans was too much for several local patriot bikers. This is their story:

On October 5th, we made the first of three October rides to the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC. We rallied before sunrise in the Harris Teeter parking lot with several other patriot bikers, many of whom had come from as far away as Hagerstown, Culpepper, Baltimore, and even New York. By 7:00 AM, we were heading for DC.

After arriving at the WWII Memorial, we couldn't

find enough motorcycle parking together, so we checked out Constitution Avenue. Some police officers were nice enough to move their cars to allow us some parking. Those cops knew why we were there, and this gesture showed us that we were all on the same page regarding the closing of the memorials.

After parking, we walked over to the WWII Memorial before any of the Honor Flight buses had arrived. There were barricades in place. However, we explained to the Park Police that we had come in peace to support the arriving Honor Flight veterans, and to our surprise, they quietly let us remove the barricades! Within the hour, the Honor Flight busses began to arrive. The WWII veterans poured out of the busses and into their wheelchairs. We all formed a line to allow them into the memorial, THEIR memorial. We shook their hands and were able to thank, personally, some of the last generation of brave WWII veterans. They were anxious to share their stories about their experiences at Iwo Jima, Pearl Harbor, Normandy, and even the Battle of Stalingrad, but they did so with humility and modesty. True heroes. And many of these men had gone on to fight in Korea and later Vietnam! We felt proud to show these men our utmost respect, and it was a moving honor to welcome them to their memorial.

The following weekend, on October 13th, we rode to the now famous Million Veteran March on the Monuments. It was a cold, rainy day, and as we again staged in the Harris Teeter parking lot before sunrise, the sky really unzipped. For anyone who has ever ridden a motorcycle, you know that riding in the rain can be a miserable experience. But we decided that our veterans





had been through far worse for us, and now it was our turn to serve them. We were honored to have US veteran and Darnestown resident Commander Dick Jurgena, USN-Ret. with us for this ride! Thank you, sir, for your service to our great nation. Additional non-biker community participants included Kathleen Petro and Kathy Raines. Thank you, ladies, for coming out in the rain to support our veterans!

So, off we rode in the rain with our unique group of dedicated supporters, back to the WWII Memorial to support the veterans and to do what we could to get the barricades down. We showed up early and discovered that the American people had already arrived! They had removed and piled up most of the WWII Memorial's barricades on the ground!! The area was packed with patriotic Americans, including many dozens of other bikers from around the country. Several



political figures gave speeches, but this was not about politics for us. For us, this was about the veterans.

Suddenly, we began to hear loud horns approaching from

a few blocks away. A small fleet of truckers from the Million Truckers Ride for the Constitution was approaching the WWII Memorial along 17th Street. Hundreds of Americans ran into the street to greet and cheer for the truckers. The rain could not dampen the overwhelming sense of the American spirit that filled the air.

The truckers made a second circle around the WWII Memorial, and then a third! The people remained in the street, cheering them, hyped up! Suddenly, police began to show up en masse to block off the entrance to 17th Street from both Independence and Constitution Avenues so that the truckers couldn't continue driving past the WWII Memorial. As a result, the Honor Flight busses couldn't get through to drop off the WWII veterans at their memorial!

After two long hours, the police forced the WWII veterans to disembark their busses a full city block away from the memorial! These 90-year old men were in wheelchairs, it was cold, and it was raining! This enraged (or inspired?) the crowd, and once again, the American spirit prevailed! Both bikers and other members of the crowd lined up and began to escort the WWII veterans down 17th Street to their memorial. Fortunately, we were able to deliver all of the veterans safely to their destination, and what could have been a disastrous event ended peacefully and respectfully for all concerned.

On October 17th, the government shut-down ended. The memorials were open again, and the barricades were gone. Several people said to us, "The government is open again, so you bikers won't need to go to the WWII Memorial anymore." Our response: "We disagree."

So, again we rode for our veterans on Saturday, October 19th, if for no other reason than to show them the respect and the honor that we felt they had earned. On this third ride, the sun was shining and the weather was warm! A true gift for us bikers! When we arrived at the WWII Memorial, we met hundreds of other American



patriots who were there for the same reason as we were – to welcome the Honor Flights of WWII veterans! We greeted and cheered for five bus loads of veterans that day, all of whom thanked us profusely for coming.



By the time this article is printed, the Honor Flight program will have finished for the sea-

son. But we will continue to serve our veterans at their memorials in DC, through all challenges, when the Honor Flights begin again in the spring. We heartily welcome fellow Darnestown residents to join us! In the meantime, to all the bikers, other American patriots, and especially the veterans whom we met on these missions, thank you. You are all TRUE AMERICANS, and we salute every one of you!

#### *Additional Information:*

Honor Flight Network: [www.honorflight.org](http://www.honorflight.org)

Patriot Guard Riders: [www.patriotguard.org](http://www.patriotguard.org)

WWII Memorial: [www.wwiimemorial.com](http://www.wwiimemorial.com)

#### *Chestnut Oak Drive Preliminary Plan Continued from Page 3*

- Nine of these 13 lots on Darnestown Road either share a driveway or parts therein and include multiple pipe stem driveways. The remaining four lots are located on a cul-de-sac which is quite different from the subject's location at the entrance to a much larger neighborhood. There are no shared or pipe stem driveways on Chestnut Oak Drive.
- Seven of the 13 lots fronting Darnestown Road are part of two more recently subdivided properties that are vacant / undeveloped. These lots are not the best representation of traditional and existing lots / homes in the neighborhood.
- The value of the subject property will likely have more impact on the value of homes on Chestnut Oak Drive than Darnestown Road, Wye Oak Drive or Country Glen Court and should therefore get the greatest emphasis.
- Homeowners on Chestnut Oak Drive are the most impacted by the subdivision of this property since they pass by the entire subject site more than homeowners along Darnestown Road, Wye Oak Drive or Country Glen Court.

#### **Lot Size**

The subject's 3.00 acre parcel is similar in lot size with the adjacent 3.28 acre parcel to the south. Lot sizes for the eight (8) most proximate lots on the opposite side of Chestnut Oak Drive range in size from a minimum of just under acre (42,830 square feet) to a maximum of over three acres. It is important to note that the one lot that is smaller than the subject's three proposed one acre lot does not look smaller than other lots on the street due to: 1) the lot has similar street frontage to adjoining lots; 2) the home has similar orientation



facing / paralleling the street; and 3) the property has its own driveway. The difference in lot size is accounted for in the rear yard which is smaller due to another lot fronting on Darnestown Road.

Most relevant, the average lot size for the most proximate 18 properties along Chestnut Oak Drive (extended from Darnestown Road to Wye Oak Drive) is 2.4 acres. In addition, the Ancient Oak West architectural covenants advocate lot sizes in the two acre range with direct access to the bridle/hiker trails in the community. The DCA would be more supportive of the subdivision of this parcel into two approximately 1.5 acre lots (still significantly smaller (by 40%) than the average 2.4 acre lots) since the size of these lots would conform more to the existing lot sizes in the Chestnut Oak neighborhood.

The subdivision of the subject property into three equally sized one acre lots makes them all tied for the second smallest lots on the street. Finally, the lot sizes are so small / clustered that access is easier via a shared driveway. There are no other shared driveways on Chestnut Oak Drive.

### **Lot Orientation**

**Home Site Street Orientation.** Of the 18 properties analyzed by the DCA, 16 (89%) have homes that face / are parallel to Chestnut Oak Drive. The two homes that do not directly orient to Chestnut Oak Drive are on the corner of Water Oak Drive of which one is accessed off Water Oak Drive. Only one of the subject's three proposed home sites has a similar street orientation. Of the other two, one fronts onto Darnestown Road and the other is angled toward the pipe stem driveway access point. It should be noted that none of the homes along similar roads – that being Wye Oak and Ancient Oak – have homes that front directly onto / are parallel to Darnestown

Road. Further, if the first lot has a home fronting onto Darnestown Road, the first thing people see when driving into this neighborhood is someone's garage / side yard.

**Home Set Backs From the Street.** Fourteen (14) of the 18 homes evaluated by the DCA have setbacks from the street ranging anywhere from 75 to 125 feet. Of the remaining four homes, two have setbacks less than 75 feet and two are greater than 125 feet. Two of the subject's proposed home sites would be among the closest, if not the closest home sites, to Chestnut Oak Drive, with 50 foot setbacks (which does not comply with Ancient Oak West Architectural Guidelines).

The subject property could accommodate two 1.5 acre lots with homes that are designed with similar home site orientation and setbacks in keeping with the character of the majority of the 18 most proximate homes.

### **Forest Conservation**

Due to the required clearing of significant trees on the subject site if subdivided into three lots, the Applicant proposes to meet a 1.42 acre replanting requirement through an off-site mitigation bank or Fee-in-Lieu. What benefit does this serve the existing neighborhood? Has an analysis been conducted to see if fewer lots would better preserve the existing forest thereby reducing and/or eliminating this off-site requirement?

### **Gateway Site**

Most importantly, the subject site is a gateway property to the neighborhood being located at the entrance to the street on the corner of Chestnut Oak Drive and Darnestown Road. Therefore, it is even more important for the development of the subject site to maintain the character





of the majority of other homes on this street and further into this neighborhood.

### **2007 Preliminary Plan for Three Lots Still Pending**

For over five years this lot has not received subdivision approval for three lots. The DCA has been contacted by every adjacent homeowner opposing subdividing this property into three lots. Many, if not all, of these homeowners have indicated that two lots would be OK.

### **Summary**

The subject's proposed three lots do not meet Montgomery County Lot Dimension code requirements because they would be:

1. Smaller than all but one lot and are significantly smaller than the average 2.4 acre lot size;
2. The only lots that share a driveway;
3. Closer, if not the closest, setbacks from the street; and
4. Dissimilar in consistent street orientation from the majority of adjoining properties.

### **Recommendation**

The DCA is not against the subdivision of this lot just the number of lots allowed. The DCA would be supportive of the subdivision of the subject property into two lots (which would still be significantly smaller than average Chestnut Oak Drive lots) and if home designs have similar lot orientation to the majority of adjoining properties. The DCA requests the Planning Board deny the current application for three lots.

### **Outcome**

Based on the DCA's opposition, testimony and

numerous letters submitted by neighbors, the planning board did not approve the subdivision application. According to follow up with the planning staff, the property owners have been asked to resubmit plans that would accommodate two sites on the property. In addition, planning staff has been advised at the time of subdivision plan re-submission, the neighborhood delineation should be changed to place more emphasis on homes in the Ancient Oak West subdivision / along Chestnut Oak Drive. Kudos to all involved!

### ***St. Nicholas Episcopal Church invites you***

To the dedication of our Labyrinth and Outdoor  
Worship/Meditation space.

Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, Episcopal Bishop  
of Washington will join us for the dedication  
of this sacred space. Our gift to the community  
is to provide outdoor meditation space for use  
by people of all faiths. We welcome our Dar-  
nestown neighbors to join us.

#### ***Where?***

St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, 15575 German-  
town Rd., Germantown, MD.

#### ***When?***

Sunday, Dec. 8, 2013 at 4:00 in the afternoon.

The dedication will be followed by a shared  
meal and a service of Compline in the church.  
People of all faith traditions are welcome!

#### ***Come Celebrate Christmas with us too!***

Christmas services on Christmas Eve,  
December 24th at

- 3 PM (Child-Oriented service)
- 7 PM (Festive Christmas service with choir)
- 10 PM (Quiet, contemplative Christmas)



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## SCHOOL NEWS & EVENTS

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### Darnestown Elementary *By Janet Swisher*

Happy Holidays Darnestown friends and neighbors! It is a wonderful time of year to reflect on just how fortunate we are to live in this community filled with tranquility and friendship. The students, staff, and parents of Darnestown Elementary are preparing for the festive Holiday season as well as the New Year. Many, many entertaining events took place over the fall season and we are happy to share just a few highlights.

Our fifth annual Read-A-Thon fundraiser was once again a huge success. The students raised \$20,921.45 by reading, recording their minutes read, and collecting sponsors over the month of October. We had high participation rate and our students read for a combined total of over 200,000 minutes. Another very popular fundraiser event, the DES Annual Book Fair was held November 7th thru 12th. Our students love shopping for books, purchasing holiday gifts, and donating books on their teacher's wish lists for both the classroom and school library. Both the READ-A-THON and Book Fair fund many programs we do throughout the year including several whole school assemblies. Thank you Darnestown Community for your support and enthusiasm for both events!

DES continues to support the Dwelling Place, a local shelter for women in need. Our students purchased new gifts for the boys and girls cur-

rently residing at Dwelling Place to make certain their holiday was filled with the surprise, fun, and laughter that every child deserves. Our students enjoyed watching the "giving boxes" fill up and took pride in their selves for giving back to a population in need.

### *Upcoming events:*

***December 6: Muffins for Mustangs***

***December 16: Instrumental Concert***

***December 23 - January 1: Winter Break***

***January 24: Bingo Night and Staff Raffle***

***February 25: Science Expo***

***March 27: Music & Arts Night***

DES wishes the Darnestown community a safe and happy holiday season!

### Seneca Academy *By Brooke Carroll*

Seneca Academy students have been busy this fall, going on a variety of field trips to support our units of inquiry. The third grade visited the Human Body exhibit at the Maryland Science Museum in Baltimore to support their unit on body systems with the central idea "Understanding how our bodies work helps us to stay healthy." Our kindergartners have taken a bus ride around Darnestown and Gaithersburg, gathering data to support their unit on knowledge of the community with the central idea "Where I live identifies my place in my community and the world." Fourth graders enjoyed their long trip to St Mary's City in support of their unit on Maryland with the central idea "Understanding our region's his-



tory gives us perspective.” The second graders have been fascinated by their study on climate and weather and loved going to Weather Bug in support of their unit with the central idea “The changing weather and seasons affect our daily lives.” Our fifth and sixth graders have gone on two trips already: One to the National Museum of Art in Washington, DC, to support their study of learning with the central idea “Learning depends on a balance of interconnected factors” and another to a local home built with primarily sustainable energy sources for their unit with the central idea “Energy exists in different forms and can be used and conserved in many ways.” And of course, all of our preschool classes have gone to the pumpkin patch!

We invite all parents and interested community members to visit Seneca Academy to learn more about how we integrate real-life, hands-on learning into all of our programming. We are offering “Walk-In Wednesdays” this year, every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, from 9:30 am - 11 am (11/6, 11/20, 12/4, 12/18, 1/8, 1/22, 2/5, 2/19, 3/5, 3/19). This is a great opportunity to take a tour, see our classrooms and campus, and learn more about our program. We will also have Open Houses on Saturday January 11th and Saturday February 1st from 9:30-11:30am. You may RSVP through our website [www.SenecaAcademy.org](http://www.SenecaAcademy.org) or by calling us at 301-869-3728. We hope to see you soon!

## Butler School

*By Diane Long*

Butler Montessori is excited to be working with Monarch Sisters School Program to become a habitat for Monarch butterflies. In preparation

for this, students in the Upper elementary have been raising Monarch caterpillars to butterfly stage, tagging them, and releasing them. Each butterfly released is tagged to allow students and scientists to follow its migration to Mexico. The first goal for Butler has students planting a “Monarch Habitat Garden” on the school’s campus. Butler will also coordinate the scheduling of class-to-class Skype sessions with a sister school in Mexico. This goal would be for the Spanish classes and will be an interesting extension of the Monarch project.

Butler’s second goal is collaborating with the Montgomery County Soil Conservation to plant a “native pollinator grassland” at Butler. Encouraging the growth of these pollinating plants is important to both the dwindling bee population as well as the butterflies in surrounding ecosystems. Combining these activities supports the work of Maria Montessori, “The child who has felt a strong love for his surrounding and for all living creatures, who has discovered joy and enthusiasm in work, gives us reason to hope that humanity can develop in a new direction.”

For more information on a Montessori Education check out our website, [www.butlerschool.org](http://www.butlerschool.org) or call 301-977-6600.





## STEPPING OUTSIDE OURSELVES

### *Mary of Nazareth School*

Heeding Pope Francis's call to "become courageous Christians and seek out those who need help the most," Mary of Nazareth School has embarked on a multifaceted Social Concerns program for the 2013-2014 school year entitled "Stepping Outside Ourselves." The program derives its name from one of Pope Francis's recent speeches in which he implored Catholics to "step outside ourselves... [and] find poverty... to seek out those on the fringes of society, who need help the most." Through sustained volunteering efforts and a curriculum that spans every subject, we hope to raise student awareness of the plight of those who are without life's most basic necessities.

Mary of Nazareth School will be working closely with A Wider Circle- a Silver Spring based organization dedicated to ending poverty. Among other things, AWC runs a "Neighbor-to-Neighbor" program, which aims to help families transition out of shelters into homes, "with dignity and hope," and a Center for Professional Development, which assists individuals in their efforts to obtain jobs.

The entire Mary of Nazareth community will play a role in the success of the "Stepping Outside Ourselves" program. The Mary of Nazareth faculty held their October retreat at AWC, volunteering as a group in AWC's Center for Community Service. Following a visit by AWC's founder, Dr. Mark Bergel, the students held a donated goods drive in October, collecting donations of household items that AWC offers free of charge to families in need. And in the winter and spring, Mary of Nazareth families will be offered the opportunity to volunteer in AWC's Center for Community Service.

The Social Concerns Committee, and their faculty chair Megan McGregor, have worked hard to integrate the theme of combating poverty into the classroom curriculum throughout the entire year. Mary of Nazareth School looks forward to working with A Wider Circle to help families start anew with dignity and hope.



## DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

**February 1, 2014**

**Please send articles for The Little Acorn to:**

**acorneditor@yahoo.com**

**or call Tanya at 202.304.7805**



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## NEWCOMERS CLUB

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### **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: The information on the following pages should be helpful and will introduce you to some things that give Darnestown a sense of community.

The Darnestown Civic Association, Inc. is a non-profit 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 (\$35 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 at the end of 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 forms and our Welcome Committee, 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.

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 DCA.

## **Darnestown 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. The 2013 edition is currently available. To obtain a copy of the Directory, call Sarah Scherer at 240-683-8533 or [sarahscherer@comcast.net](mailto: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 is a list of these groups:*

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

**Boy Scout Troop 1094**  
Scoutmaster Michael Joyce  
(301-977-0526)  
[sm@troop1094.org](mailto:sm@troop1094.org)

**Brownies & Junior Girl Scouts**  
Cathy Sharpe  
(301-519-9520)

**Butler School**  
15951 Germantown Road  
Beckie Hardie, Academic Head  
(301-977-6600)

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

**Darne Bloomers Garden Club**  
Becky Hanley, President  
(301-330-5437)  
Barbara Andreaasen, Membership  
(301-330-4485)

**Darnestown Civic Association**  
14132B 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  
Dave Hardy, General Manager,  
[davidhardy27@hotmail.com](mailto:davidhardy27@hotmail.com)  
(301-330-9616)

**Friends of the Library-Quince Orchard Chapter**  
Membership, (Vacant)

**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  
Mrs. Monifa McKnight,  
Principal  
(301-840-4770)

**Thomas Jefferson Preparatory**  
12801 Darnestown Road  
Darnestown, Maryland 20878  
Zorianna Harabatch,  
Head of School  
[www.tjprep.org](http://www.tjprep.org)  
(301-330-7550)

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





Darnestown Civic Association, Inc.  
14132B Darnestown Road  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
Email: [dca@darnestowncivic.org](mailto:dca@darnestowncivic.org)  
Website: [www.darnestowncivic.org](http://www.darnestowncivic.org)

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DARNESTOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

