



# THE LITTLE ACORN

THE DARNESTOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
darnestowncivic.org

Volume 57 Number 4  
December 2020

## President's Corner

### Notes from the President

By Scott Mostrom



Just six months ago, in the March 2020 issue of *The Little Acorn*, I started off my 'Notes from the President' with:

*One of the first things I typically ask someone is "Where are you originally from?" or "Where'd you grow up?" I instinctively ask that not just because it's interesting or a conversation starter but because where someone has grown up or lived can really frame their perspective ... and that's what I find the most interesting.*

I wasn't trying to sound cerebral or deeply insightful. I'm just so influenced by growing up and living in Darnestown that I'm kind of fascinated by neighbors originally from other cities, other states, and even other countries who have come to call Darnestown "home." But it wasn't until recently that I realized just how short-sighted even this perspective was ... where someone was *physically* from or where they *literally* grew up.

For me, a white, blonde-haired kid, growing up in Darnestown was pretty easy and I assumed it was the same for all of the other kids I grew up with. I never gave it much thought until a conversation about a month ago. That's when I spoke with one of our residents who also grew up in Darnestown around the same time as me. She shared her experiences as an African American female growing up in predominantly white Darnestown. As you can imagine, we had different experiences—in

*Continued on 2*

### DCA Virtual Town Meeting December 10th, 2020 | 7:30pm

The link to join virtually will be available at [www.darnestowncivic.org](http://www.darnestowncivic.org), by email, and on the Darnestown Facebook page.

### What's Happening in Darnestown

*More details on all these events  
can be found in this issue.*

#### Dec. 06 | Santa Visits Darnestown

Map and details can be found at [www.darnestowncivic.org](http://www.darnestowncivic.org)

#### Dec. 6 | 5:00 p.m.

#### Darnestown Virtual Holiday Lighting

Details and a link to the event can be found at [www.darnestowncivic.org](http://www.darnestowncivic.org)

#### Dec. 10 | 7:30 p.m.

#### DCA Virtual Town Meeting

Details and a link to the meeting can be found at [www.darnestowncivic.org](http://www.darnestowncivic.org)

#### Dec. 10–Dec. 18 | 5:00 p.m.

#### 1st Annual Menorah Lighting

Details can be found at [www.darnestowncivic.org](http://www.darnestowncivic.org)

**Remember: You can view the *The Little Acorn* online in full color and with clickable links.  
Go to [darnestowncivic.org](http://darnestowncivic.org).**

*Continued from 1*

some cases very different. There were many things that I took for granted that she couldn't. There were challenges she had to face that I never realized even existed. Well, at least I never associated any of those challenges to Darnestown.

I have to admit that really hit me, probably because it struck so close to home. I'm still not sure if it was just naivety or a blind spot in my awareness. The reason doesn't really matter. What matters is *her* experiences and that those experiences, and her perspectives from those, are very real. The opportunity to have those shared and to shed light on something I wasn't even aware of is a gift.

This story was shared with several members of the DCA Board who met with a group of our residents concerned with diversity, equity, and inclusion within Darnestown. Most of those in the group were residents of color from varying backgrounds who also shared their perspectives—all incredibly enlightening. One of the outcomes from these meetings was a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement that was started by the DCA this past summer but not finalized. We collaborated and the statement was

approved by the DCA Board and is posted on the home page of our website [see Sara Hunter's article below].

This statement isn't just words. It isn't just a one-time effort to check a box, as so many corporations have done since this past summer. This is a step in defining who we are as a community and who we will be. It is a step toward establishing a culture of acceptance and inclusion, regardless of where you're from or your race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation. It's a step forward in appreciating the value of diversity that makes us a great community.

I'm very proud of our Darnestown community. I think for the most part we're very inclusive and certainly are much more diverse than when I grew up in the 1980s. But are we perfect? No. Is there more we can do to make sure everyone is welcome and included? Yes. Every family should feel that their differences are valued. No child, no adult, and no family should ever feel excluded or should ever feel out of place in Darnestown. It's the responsibility of each of us who call Darnestown 'home' to make sure of that and to do everything we can to foster an inclusive community for all of our neighbors.

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## DCA Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

*By Sara Hunter*

Following the national events of this past summer, a group of concerned Darnestown residents reached out to the DCA to stress the importance of having a public statement from the DCA demonstrating its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Such a statement did not exist and all agreed it was important for the DCA, as the community leader, to establish its commitment and expectations for an inclusive Darnestown community.

To that end, and in a collaborative partnership between the residents and the DCA Board, the DCA homepage now features the following statement:

*The DCA is committed to support diversity, inclusion, and equity within our association and across our community. Discrimination has no place in our community. We encourage civil engagement. We work to facilitate community discussion with local governing officials who make policies. Our job is to welcome a community of different voices where freedom speaks and equal justice is served.*

As a member of the group that consulted on this work, I'd like to publicly commend the DCA for taking this initial small but important step to ensure our multi-ethnic, multi-generational community stays diverse, tolerant, and accepting, and that our inclusive welcome to all members of our community is front and center.

We will continue to strive to achieve this goal and more work remains ahead!

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information References

In this unprecedented time, the DCA wants to make sure all of our residents have the resources to assist with prevention, preparedness, and support resources, as well as stay abreast on the latest closures and cancellations. See our website at **[darnestowncivic.org](http://darnestowncivic.org)** for links to Montgomery County, State of Maryland and CDC websites who offer a wide range of information and resources.

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# Community Update

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## Road Work Ahead

*By DCA Roads Task Force*

The Roads Task Force continues to build relationships with the county. In case you missed our update in *The Little Acorn* September issue (available online) you may wish to review our blitz of work over the summer. We have since met with representatives from Montgomery Planning about the Rustic Roads Master Plans, the Bicycle Master Plan, and Vision Zero. There was a presentation at our September Town Meeting and a call for community input on Rustic Roads with a successful response back to the county resulting in changes to the proposed Rustic Roads Master Plan.

We've been studying plans, current conditions, regulations, and efforts in other parts of the country,

and discussing our approach to advocating for less stressful roads. We are suggesting policy changes to reduce through traffic and make our roads easier to use for cars, bicycles, and pedestrians.

We are looking forward to asking you directly to weigh in on many additional aspects of our roads during 2021. If you have time to help with our efforts, wish to make broad observations, have specific ideas, or immediate concerns on issues such as pavement markings and sign maintenance, please email us at [rtf@darnestowncivic.org](mailto:rtf@darnestowncivic.org).

Please stay VISIBLE, stay focused, be courteous, and slow down.

## Darnestown Artists and Farmers Market

*By Stephanie Kunkle*

On Saturday, September 12th, the Darnestown Civic Association and the Darnestown Swim & Racquet Club hosted an Artists and Farmers Market. It was a huge success with many members of the community coming out to support. The morning was filled with live music and many local vendors and artists selling everything from flowers to honey to facemask laces. With such positive feedback, we plan to host several markets in 2021.





## DCA Takes a Hike

*By Pam Dubois*

Who knew the DCA's first hike of the year in November would be blessed with t-shirt weather? The Seneca Bluff Trail is a 6.2 mile (one way) lightly trafficked out and back trail that essentially parallels Seneca Creek, spanning from River Road to Route 28/Darnestown Road in the Seneca Creek State Park. It features a great forest setting with Seneca Creek vistas, and is accessible for hiking, running, mountain biking, and horseback riding. The DCA hike started at the southern end at the Old River Road trailhead (next to the historic "Poole's Store") and went up to the Montevideo Road parking lot (about 2 miles north just before the bridge by Rocklands) and back.

Participants included the DCA President, Scott Mostrom, Scott and Mindy MacGriff, Ursula Kattner, Katie Rapp, Ann Satsangi, Jay Wallace and myself. The inaugural hike was enjoyed by all and we are planning more in 2021. If you have a favorite trail, let us know at [membership@darnestowncivic.org](mailto:membership@darnestowncivic.org). We hope you will join us on our next hike.



## Reimagining Public Safety Task Force

*By Dick Jurgena*

We live in a relatively safe community here in Montgomery County. And, we need to do everything we can to keep our community safe for our families, as well as all the families of Montgomery County. Our County Executive, Mr. Elrich, has some concerns about public safety as well, and on November 1st, sent a letter to citizens about the new "Reimagining Public Safety Task Force," a group of 46 community representatives who will "advise the County on community needs and how we may rebalance spending priorities and invest more in communities." (See letter at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rps/Resources/Files/survey/Reimagining-Public-Safety-CE-Letter-en.pdf>) With this task force, Mr. Elrich hopes to promote a thoughtful discussion and review our public safety efforts. "The Task Force will report back to the County on the community's needs and interests and will make recommendations on how to accomplish these by prioritizing available funds for spending and investment to improve public safety in our communities."

To gather information on the community's needs and interests a survey was sent to residents. The time frame was very short. I learned about it on November 11th and the survey was due on November 14th, which of course was long before this article went to print. If you did not get it you can try the following: <https://montgomerycountymd.seamlessdocs.com/f/rpssurvey>.

The task force will gather and analyze the responses and hold a virtual community discussion with the County Executive on Thursday, December 3rd.

The point is we need to make our views known because the responses to and discussion of this survey are going to affect the funding and responsibilities of the MCPD and thereby the future safety of our citizens and their families. The Council has already introduced Bill 46-20, which would prohibit the Montgomery County Police Department from deploying School Resource Officers (SROs) to county schools. If you did not get a chance to participate in the survey and/or the virtual discussion, send an email or call the County Executive's Office and let him know how you feel about the questions. His office number is (240) 777-0311 or to send him a written communication go to the following: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/exec/Contactcex.aspx> and fill out a form.

# Esworthy Road Scarecrow Contest

*By Kellie Hodges*

My family has lived here since 1986 and we have a decorative painting studio, Billet Collins Studio. My mom's maiden name is Billet and my sister and I are Collins. We're friends with a few families on Esworthy Road, went to school with a few of the kids who have since moved away, and realized there were quite a few new families that we may not know.

The three of us were brainstorming ways to connect the community while staying socially distant. Because we're a family of artists, we were looking for something creative and fun, and thought a scarecrow contest might be just the thing!

Before we approached residents, we ran the idea past Susie Gooch who is really the glue of our neighborhood and runs the Darnestown Facebook page. She could not have been more encouraging and really made the whole thing happen!

With Susie's enthusiastic help, we invited every house on Esworthy Road to participate, from Seneca to River Road. We kept the rules low key and easy so everyone would feel like it would be fun to play along. Neighbors were simply asked to make a scarecrow out of anything they have at home or buy one from the store and post him at their entrance. Low pressure fun!

To encourage participation we made sure to include an award for the most favorite scarecrow, which Billet Collins sponsored. The neighbors were invited to vote online for the scarecrow they liked best.

Susie Gooch was the first neighbor to put out a



scarecrow and inspired a lot of others to give it a try. Soon after we saw a total of 14 families participate! A lot of great homemade scarecrows popped up as well as a few team-spirited store-bought scarecrows. I absolutely loved that so many people gave it a shot and showed their creativity!

The scarecrow at 14040 won! It was a homemade scarecrow with a corgi head that light up at night, perched on the fence with a jack-o-lantern.

We got a TON of positive responses from neighbors and others in Darnestown! A lot came through on the Darnestown Facebook page, but we also heard from local businesses and neighbors on other streets! I loved hearing that people would drive down our road just to enjoy the Halloween spirit!

Keep an eye out next October. Billet Collins will definitely be hosting this again next year!





## A Social and Safe Halloween

Halloween certainly looked a little different this year, but lovers of ghosts and goblins around Darnestown found creative ways to make the holiday fun and safe for kids of all ages.

Residents of Weathered Barn Court hosted “Spooktacular Drive ‘Boos’” and a socially distant happy hour pumpkin painting.



In Spring Meadows, the smallest residents were invited to a socially distanced parade with a DJ and costume contest prizes.



The Moss family invited “ghouls” and “boos” of any age to strike a pose at their FANG-tastic Happy Halloween sign.



Lori Zimet organized a “Spooktacular Scavenger Hunt” for Darnestown families.



## Darnestown Heritage Park Menorah

Heritage Park may look a little brighter this holiday season. Look for the new menorah which will be lit for the first time on December 10th at 5:00 p.m. Check [darnestowncivic.org](http://darnestowncivic.org) for details closer to the date.

## Happy Holidays Darnestown

The holidays are not canceled! But like many other events in 2020, we will be pivoting and adjusting our plans accordingly. Be sure to check the website for updated event information. And don't forget to be on the lookout for our “Home for the Holidays” flags around town.

# Molly's Walk and Roll

*By Molly Lichtenstein*

I owe you all so much more than a “thank you”! This year has been one for the books, for EVERYONE. Darnestown has been so supportive in finding better treatments, so that one day we can find a cure! Wow! What



a year it's been!!! Between my crazy health this year and the craziness that is in our world right now, I was not sure how the walk was going to come off

this year. Well, let me tell you! Not only was the walk an amazing success, but we also had year #3, of Molly's Mulligan (a golf tournament benefiting ASAP)!

However, I cannot take credit for the success of these events! It is all thanks to the wonderful people like you, who choose to support our cause. Because of YOU, we were able to achieve great things! Between the Molly's 6th Annual ASAP Walk & Roll and Molly's Mulligan, we raised a total of \$35,448!!!! That is absolutely amazing!!! When I originally got into fundraising years ago, I had no idea what this walk and other events would turn into. I am forever grateful for all of the support I have received and that I continue to

receive! Without you, NONE of this would be possible! Your support will go in one of three directions.

**ASAP focuses on research:** “[ASAP] is committed to putting research dollars to work right away, funding answers to vital questions as soon as possible. **On education:** every year at the end of July ASAP hosts a conference in a different part of the United States. This conference is a unique conference in which both doctors and patients are attending the same lectures. This year because of the global pandemic, ASAP was able to host its first virtual conference! ASAP was able to educate ANYONE who wanted to tune in because they hosted this virtual conference at no cost to the participants! It was truly an amazing three days of jammed-packed speeches, where 24 of the Chiari and Syringomyelia and related disorder specialists donated their time to educate patients, families, and friends. **And on support:** ASAP does an amazing job at connecting people with the type of support that works best for the individual. ASAP runs online support groups, telephone support groups, and local support groups.

You have made a difference in my life and you have also made a difference in the lives of many others who fight just like I do!

Thank you!

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## Under Ground — Septic Fields

*By Steve Ellis (From The Little Acorn September 2006)*

Sewer service has been an overriding issue in Darnestown since the first farm was subdivided in the late 1950's. The large lots would not have happened if sewer service were available.

Some people want, even need, a relatively large lot. Darnestown residents, at least initially, fall into this category. We share the understanding that our water related wastes decompose in subterranean concealment not far from our homes. Feelings of horror and disgust and thoughts of disaster are common when the outflow pipe fills and backs up into our homes. It's septic—the sewer alternative. Don't allow septic to become a pejorative word in your house:

1. Put as little as possible animal or vegetable fat/grease down your sink.

2. Do not put eggshells and coffee grounds down your sink.

These materials will clog and solidify in the soil around the effluent flow from your septic tank. This can form an impenetrable barrier. If the situation continues and more blocking occurs in your septic field, there is a potential for back up into your home.

3. Sanitary napkins and other similar objects should not go into the toilet.
4. Have your septic tank pumped out every two to five years depending on your situation and household size. It is not all that expensive, especially when compared to sewer service rates.

I have heard people say, “Haven't had a problem in 25 years. I don't need to do anything,” only to have their yard dug up a year later.



## Meet the “Pandemic Puppies” of Darnestown

*By Diana Foley*

The puppies were popping up everywhere. First, in the spring during my daughter’s Zoom classes, and then throughout the summer and fall during my own neighborhood dog walks. Everywhere we went, it seemed another Darnestown neighbor had a new “pandemic puppy”!

Animal shelters, non-profit rescues, and private breeders have all reported a surge in adoptions, and long waiting lists, since the start of pandemic-related shutdowns in March. Among the many factors which have led to skyrocketing adoptions and sales during the past six months, include: extra free time, newfound ability to work from home, and entertainment for the kids—not to mention coping with the pandemic stress that we’ve all come to know!

Let’s meet some of Darnestown’s newest dogs!

### Moss Family—“Brewster”



This summer the Moss Family brought home a Miniature Bernedoodle (a Bernese Mountain Dog crossed with a Miniature Poodle) they have named “Brewster Livingston Moss, PhD (Perfectly Happy Dog).” The Mosses are among those who saw an opening in the pandem-

ic to take on raising a young puppy, a challenge that seemed impossible in their busy pre-pandemic lives. They love that Brewster is a cuddly non-shedder and lets the kids dress him up in costumes, but are working with typical challenges like chewing. (Although they note that the risk of having their toys chewed is encouraging the kids to pick up!)

### Mirzaians Family—“Archie”

The Mirzaianses have always liked German Shepherds, and when outside life shut down during the pandemic they decided the timing was finally right to get a puppy. The Mirzaianses love that Archie manages to be both silly and protective, but admit he has made daily



life a lot more hectic—especially when you add in his newly diagnosed food allergies (a good reminder that the unconditional love of a dog also comes with a lot of responsibilities). While they advise others to think long and hard about getting a puppy, the Mirzaianses are happy to have Archie in their lives and welcome the distraction and a reason to get outside and away from increasingly virtual schedules.

### Pohl Family—“Thor”



The Pohl family didn’t intend for their German Shepherd puppy “Thor” to be a pandemic puppy—they previously had German Shepherds and were looking to take in a new family member before the world shut down. But their timing proved lucky, as Thor joined them in February and provided a wonderful distraction

during the lockdown phase—which also made potty training much easier. Thor loves to play soccer and go on long hikes with the family, and they love having his playful and innocent spirit around during these challenging times.

### Yuen Family—“Vader”



Count the Yuens among those who saw an opportunity in the early part of the shutdowns to bring a puppy into their life and put their extra free time to use. They love that they had extra time to bond with their new Border Collie mix and

more time to devote to training. They value Vader’s intelligence, and that even at 60 pounds he still tries to cuddle on their laps!



## O'Donnell Family—"Molly" and "Ziggy"



The O'Donnells doubled down during the pandemic and brought home *two* pandemic puppies: "Molly," a Golden Sammy (a Golden Retriever/Samoyed mix), and "Ziggy," a Cavapoo (a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel/Poodle mix). They are happy to have gotten two dogs, because each

has been great at keeping the other company, and for this reason they would recommend getting two dogs, because it makes life easier in the long run.

## Miloski Family—"Coco Bella"



The Miloskis were surprised by how well their new Mini Labradoodle puppy, "Coco Bella," adjusted to life with her new family. They say they always wanted a second dog in their family, and that the pandemic gave them the opportunity to finally pull the trigger. The Miloskis say Coco Bella is everything you'd want in a

dog—someone who is happy every day and greets you like she hasn't seen you in years, even after just a quick run to Harris Teeter!

## The DCA needs your Support!

Become a member for 2021!—the more members we have, the more impact we will have as an organization with the county and state governments. The funds support the publication of *The Little Acorn* and community-wide events. It's a bargain at \$35/year!

The best way to become a member is to register and pay online at [darnestowncivic.org](http://darnestowncivic.org); the second best way is to register online and mail a check in, using the form at the back of the issue.

*Thank you for your support!*



## 2020 in the Rear-view! Memberships, Swim, Camp, Tennis, Pickleball & Social Events

*By Aleks Schiff*

Let's put the unforgettable Summer of 2020 behind us and look forward to a better 2021! As we prepare the Club for its winter slumber, the courts have been very active throughout the fall with members playing lots of tennis and pickleball.

Planning for next summer has already begun, and we are hoping to have all our programming fully active—summer camp, swim team, tennis and pickleball, yoga, and social events. And our off-season project for early spring will be the pool resurfacing.



*1st Annual Doggie Dip  
was a huge success for our  
four-legged members!*

With Coach Teri's leadership, we had fantastic Fall Tennis & Pickleball Tournaments, which were both a huge success again this year. We're optimistic for a spring tournament, so stay tuned! Our Social Events team hit it out of the park with our very successful 1st Annual Doggie Dip; Camp Green Zone is searching for a

new camp director for 2021; and our Demon Swim Team is looking forward to having a season in 2021 with Coach Pat's leadership! Yoga was a huge success, as well, and we hope to bring it back next season. We even collaborated with the DCA to bring our community the Darnestown Artists & Farmers Market!

Come join the fun—our member community is like no other! We are a year-round active community with tennis, pickleball, swim, and social events throughout the year. Off-season is the perfect time to check out our membership promotions, so check our Facebook page and website for the latest offers. Our website will have 2021 information after January 1st! [www.dsclub.com](http://www.dsclub.com)

### Connect with the Club and Stay in the Know!

Facebook: [@DarnestownSwimRacquetClub](https://www.facebook.com/DarnestownSwimRacquetClub)

Instagram: [@DSRClub](https://www.instagram.com/DSRClub)

GM@dsclub.com

15004 Spring Meadows Drive,

Darnestown, MD 20874

(301) 330-1340

## Boy Scout Troop 1094

Darnestown's Boy Scout Troop 1094 kicked off the 2020-2021 season with their virtual Court of Honor which provided an opportunity to present 54 merit badges earned over the summer and to advance Scouts who earned new ranks. Looking ahead, the troop will do a mix of virtual meetings and outside events (hikes, fishing, bike rides, outdoor skills) within their assigned small size Patrols while practicing safe scouting during the Covid-19 pandemic.



*Thomas DeRose*



*Rohin Marwaha*

October 2-3, Troop 1094 Scouts spent two nights family camping in Assateague Island State Park. Experiencing the first of the fall's cooler weather, the Scouts camped on the dunes by the shore of the Atlantic Ocean and spent their days swimming and taking a guided kayak tour of the local ecosystem. A Park Ranger gave a live demonstration of birds, reptiles, and mammals who make their home at the park.

The troop is pleased to announce three members who achieved the rank of Eagle Scout this fall: Thomas DeRose, Rohin Marwaha and



*Jack Randall*

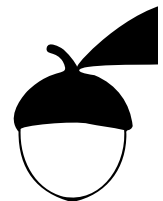
School and his Eagle project was to refresh the front of Darnestown Elementary School by planting new bushes, cleaning up the flower beds, and repainting and building a frame around the blue "DES" letters in front of the school. He is currently looking at colleges and he plans to study Business or Finance. These Eagle Scouts are a shining example to many others. We wish them the best in life ahead. Never give up on your dreams. We can't wait to see what the future holds for them next!

Troop 1094's fall events include Scouting for Food on November 14th, a clean-up day at Darnestown Presbyterian Church on November 28th, winter backpacking on December 4-5th and Wreaths Across America on December 19th.

For more information on Troop 1094, please contact Rosemary DeRose, Committee Chair at [deroseline@comcast.net](mailto:deroseline@comcast.net).

**HELP DRIVE THE FUTURE OF DARNESTOWN!**

## Become a 2021 Member of the Darnestown Civic Association



Your membership allows the DCA to provide important services to our community:

- *The Little Acorn*
- DCA Hoedown
- DCA Spring Social
- Holiday Tree Lighting
- Town Meetings
- Town Sign Maintenance
- American Flag Program
- Holiday Flag Program
- DCA Website
- Lead Darnestown in Key Issues
  - » Impacting our residents
  - » School Zoning & Safety
  - » Road Traffic & Safety
  - » Crime
- » Power & Telephone Reliability
- » Darnestown Village Development
- » Montgomery County Master Plan Development
- » Environmental & Agriculture Reserve Protection
- » DCA Contingency Legal Fund

**Visit [www.darnestowncivic.org](http://www.darnestowncivic.org) to join now!**

Annual Dues are only \$35. Additional giving levels include \$50 'Friend of Darnestown', \$100 'Sponsor', \$150 'Acorn' Program. All paid 2021 members will be listed in an upcoming issue of *The Little Acorn*.



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# Meet Our New Business Member

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## The Tyra Law Firm, LLC

*Neil W. Tyra, Esq.*

I went to law school late in life after success in several other careers. After cooking for a living all over Annapolis I spent 20+ years in the technology space. All the while I was a practicing martial artist and came to own and operate a highly successful martial arts studio. You might remember The Kenshin Karate School as we were located at the Travilah-Glen Shopping Center right here in Darnestown. Finally, I entered law school at The Catholic University of America here in Washington, DC.

I did most of my intern work during law school at the Montgomery County State's Attorney's office before joining a small boutique law firm in DC doing personal injury law. In 2007 I left that firm to form my own solo practice. Since then, I have transitioned first to family law and now to primarily estate planning, estate administration, guardianships, and adoption.

As an estate planning attorney, I have primarily focused my practice on the needs of regular folks with modest sized estates. My motivation for helping my neighbors stems principally from the difficulty I have had with my mother's estate. Today, we manage to serve our clients almost exclusively online using the latest technologies to make the process of creating a Will, Trust or any other document as simple and as easy as possible.

Call, email, or hit me up on social media. I'd love to assist you in protecting your hard-earned assets and achieving peace of mind for you and your family.

(301) 315-0811

[neiltyra@tyralawfirm.com](mailto:neiltyra@tyralawfirm.com)

[www.tyralawfirm.com](http://www.tyralawfirm.com)

[www.linkedin.com/in/tyralawfirm](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tyralawfirm)

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## Churches

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### Darnestown Presbyterian Church

#### Christmas Eve

Circumstances permitting, we hope to offer options for limited (socially distanced) visits to our decorated church on Christmas Eve, though our 8:00 p.m. worship service will likely be a primarily "streamed" event like our Sunday services. As with everything else in

the year 2020, this is all subject to change. Check our website for updates.

#### Live-Streaming Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

We continue **live-streaming our Sunday service on YouTube and Facebook** (search for "Darnestown Presbyterian Church"). And while we can't yet welcome the general public to our renovated campus, contact Larry Ciorlito at [Ciorlito@comcast.net](mailto:Ciorlito@comcast.net) or Kathy Kurkjian at [kpk1@comcast.net](mailto:kpk1@comcast.net) to arrange a personal, socially distanced tour. Check our church website for updates: <http://www.darnestownnpc.org/>.

### We Welcome Your Submissions to *The Little Acorn*

Deadline for the next issue:

**February 1, 2021**

Email ideas, questions or articles to:  
[acorn@darnestowncivic.org](mailto:acorn@darnestowncivic.org)

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# Schools

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## Darnestown Elementary

*By Ashley Mostrom*

Resiliency! That is what the students and staff have demonstrated as we continue with our virtual learning. We are proud of how hard our school community has worked together to master new platforms, technologies, and communication methods. We like to say we are #MUSTANGSTRONG.

Even school in the virtual environment couldn't stop our PTA from running functions. From restaurant nights to Spirit Wear, our PTA President Kendra Damiecki is working her magic to make sure our school community stays connected. Our Fall Scholastic Book Fair was a big success. If you are looking to purchase books, our online bookstore is still up and running. Please visit <https://www.scholastic.com/bf/darnestownelementaryschool> to support our school.

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## Butler Montessori Preschool-Middle School

*By Miki Boulin*



*Butler Montessori Dec 2020*

Our preschool program (ages 3-6) is in full swing with indoor/outdoor classes, engaging lessons, and hikes on our 22-acre campus. Children love how every school day is fun and doesn't feel like "work." Recently students learned about botany and biology by dissecting

flowers and studying creek life! *Interested in a place where your child is free to learn at their own pace and begs to go to school?* Visit [www.ButlerSchool.org](http://www.ButlerSchool.org). Limited openings for Spring/Fall 2021.

*"Butler Camp is the best outdoor camp in the area, even in the times of COVID. You saved our summer—thank you!"*

—Jane, Camp Parent

Butler Camp celebrates 40 years! We're kicking it off with some new additions to our classic camp favorites. Safety first: We're continuing our COVID-19 protocols into 2021, with small groups, highly trained counselors, and robust safety measures. Visit [www.ButlerCamp.org](http://www.ButlerCamp.org) on January 10 to secure your spot!

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## Seneca Academy

*By Dr. Michelle Parker, Head of School*

Seneca Academy is celebrating the beginning of its fourth month of in-person schooling for our pre-school and elementary students! Over the summer, a team of professionals worked on creating a plan that would allow for safe reopening on campus with intentionally small class sizes and extra health measures. We began with several weeks of outdoor school on our 6.5-acre campus and, though we continue to maximize time in nature, we have successfully transitioned into our bright, airy classrooms. While many of our classes are full now, we do still have limited spaces available in our preschool and kindergarten program. Please contact us to learn more about how we are preserving the wonder of childhood each and every day!





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# Business Directory

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Looking for a local business? The generosity of these local businesses helps to pay for the printing and distribution of *The Little Acorn*. You can also access this listing on our website under the **Community Information** tab.

**Allstate | Insurance & Financial Services**

14100 Darnestown Road, Suite D, Darnestown  
301-670-4150  
larryakinde@allstate.com

**Bretton Woods | Recreation Center**

15700 River Rd, Darnestown  
301-948-3357  
bwrc.org

**Brezovec and Associates**

15120 Water Oak Dr, Darnestown  
301-300-6279  
michael.brezovec@gmail.com

**Clark Tree Services | Tree Service**

5 Finegan Ct, Darnestown  
240-560-8733  
daniel@clarktrees.com

**Michael D. Fox | Real Estate**

Compass Real Estate  
14100 Darnestown Rd, Darnestown  
301-938-3148  
mikefoxrealtor@gmail.com

**Darnestown Smiles | Family Dentistry**

14128 Darnestown Rd, Darnestown  
240-477-8251  
mail@darnestownsmiles.com

**Guardians Complete Land Care | Landscaping**

14119 Seneca Road, Darnestown  
240-328-5805  
steve@guardianslandcare.com

**McConnell Heating & A/C, Inc. | HVAC Installation and Service**

14701 Poplar Hill Rd, Darnestown  
301-537-8524  
office@mcconnellhvac.com

**Mercer Goods**

Scott Vuocolo  
15600 Indian Run Ct, Gaithersburg  
609-647-6830  
scott@mercergoods.com

**Noahs' Preferred Properties | Real Estate**

313 Main St, Kentlands  
301-674-0990  
jnoah@noahsproperties.com

**Preferred Insurance Solutions | Auto, Home and Business Insurance**

20030 Century Blvd, Ste. 201, Germantown  
301-428-3344  
ins@preferredinsurancesolutions.com

**Smokey Glen Farm | Event Facilities and BBQs**

16407 Riffleford Rd, Darnestown  
301-948-1518  
jsweet@smokeyglenfarm.com

**Stiles Dentistry | Dentist**

333 Main St, Gaithersburg  
301-947-6900  
smile@stilesdentistry.com

**SwimLabs | Swim School**

353 Muddy Branch Rd, Gaithersburg  
240-801-4518  
ddombay@swimlabs.com

**The Tyra Law Firm, LLC | Estate Planning Law Office**

Rockville  
301-315-0811  
neiltyra@tyralawfirm.com

**Valerie Fuster | Realtor**

Long and Foster, Inc.  
10200 River Rd, Potomac  
301-299-6000 office  
301-980-3083 direct  
Valerie@LNF.com

**Valley Mill | Camp**

15101 Seneca Rd, Darnestown  
301-948-0220  
evelyn@valleymill.com

**Whitman Summer Camp | Camp**

14131 Seneca Rd, Darnestown  
301-820-8008  
whitmansummercamp@gmail.com

**Windridge Vineyards Farm | Farm, Winery**

PO Box 149, Adamstown  
301-607-4399  
robert@windridgefarm.com

**Interested in joining this list?**

Please use our online application form at  
**darnestowncivic.org.**

## Service Providers

To be included on this list in the next issue of *The Little Acorn*, please email your contact information including your year of birth to [acorn@darnestowncivic.org](mailto:acorn@darnestowncivic.org) before August 1, 2020. Please let us know if you no longer want to be listed. Of course, for those over 21, you may be listed as an adult. We reserve this listing for those who are members of the DCA. A great reason to join! Please note that babysitters and mother's helpers must be under 21 to be listed.

### Babysitters & Mother's Helpers

Melissa Szwed (2004)  
301-519-0645

Ashley Mostrom (2003)  
240-277-8526

Jennifer Juhring (2004)  
240-575-0009

### House/Pet Sitters

Jonas Skucas (2005)  
301-525-2501

Darius Skucas (2002)  
301-525-2728

### Notary Services

Laura Bivans  
301-977-4734

Tina Kalil  
301-943-9840

Elisa Lane  
301-990-299

## Darnestown Schools, Organizations & Churches

### Schools

#### Butler Montessori School

15951 Germantown Rd  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
301-977-6600

#### Circle School/Seneca Academy

15601 Germantown Rd  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
301-869-3728

#### Darnestown Elementary School

15030 Turkey Foot Rd  
Darnestown, MD 20878  
301-548-4260

#### Jones Lane Elementary School

15110 Jones Ln  
Darnestown, MD 20878  
301-840-8160

#### Lakelands Park Middle School

1200 Main St  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-670-1400

#### Mary of Nazareth School

14131 Seneca Rd  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
301-869-0940  
[Maryofnazareth.org](http://Maryofnazareth.org)

#### Northwest High School

12501 Richter Farm Rd  
Germantown, MD 20874  
301-601-4660

#### Quince Orchard High School

15800 Quince Orchard Rd  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-840-4686

### Organizations

#### Boy Scout Troop 1094

[sm@troop1094.org](mailto:sm@troop1094.org)

#### Darne Bloomers Garden Club

[Darnebloomers.com](http://Darnebloomers.com)

#### Darnestown Civic Association

14132B Darnestown Rd  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
[Darnestowncivic.org](http://Darnestowncivic.org)

#### Darnestown Swim and Racquet Club

15004 Spring Meadows Dr  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
[dsrclub.com](http://dsrclub.com)  
[gm@dsrclub.com](mailto:gm@dsrclub.com)  
301-330-1340

### Churches

#### Darnestown Presbyterian Church

15120 Turkey Foot Rd  
Darnestown, MD 20878  
301-948-9127  
[Darnestownpc.org](http://Darnestownpc.org)  
[dpchurch@comcast.net](mailto:dpchurch@comcast.net)

#### Fairhaven United Methodist Church

Rev. Kenneth Hawes  
12801 Darnestown Rd  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
301-330-5433

#### Gaithersburg International Christian Fellowship

13101 Darnestown Rd  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-869-8343  
[welcome@gicf.church](mailto:welcome@gicf.church)

#### Our Lady of the Visitation Parish

Rev. Dr. Raymond L. Fecteau  
14139 Seneca Rd  
Darnestown MD 20874  
301-948-5536  
[Olv.org](http://Olv.org)  
[parishoffice@olv.org](mailto:parishoffice@olv.org)

#### Seneca Community Church

Rev. Kenneth N. Nelson  
13900 Berryville Rd  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
301-869-9326

#### St. Nicholas Episcopal Church

Rev. Beth O'Callaghan  
15575 Germantown Rd  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
240-631-2800  
[Saintnicks.com](http://Saintnicks.com)



## The Little Acorn

Editor: Amber Colleran (acorn@darnestowncivic.org)

Publisher: Darnestown Civic Association

Proofreader: Sarah Scherer

## Darnestown Civic Association

President:	Scott Mostrom (president@darnestowncivic.org)	Trustees:	Scott Damiecki (trustee@darnestowncivic.org)
Vice President:	Tim Sanders (vicepresident@darnestowncivic.org)		Paul Klee (trustee@darnestowncivic.org)
Treasurer:	Gretchen Brown (treasurer@darnestowncivic.org)		Stephanie Kunkle (trustee@darnestowncivic.org)
Secretary:	Susan Allaway (secretary@darnestowncivic.org)		

## Committee Chairs

Compliance:	Michael Gottlieb (compliance@darnestowncivic.org)	Softball:	Dave Bivans (softball@darnestowncivic.org)
Darnestown Village:	Chris Collins (village@darnestowncivic.org)	Strategic Planning:	Tim Sanders (strategicplanning@darnestowncivic.org)
Database:	Scott Mostrom (database@darnestowncivic.org)	Website:	Ben Jamieson (website@darnestowncivic.org)
Flag Program:	Tim Sanders (flag@darnestowncivic.org)		Neil Agate (website@darnestowncivic.org)
History:	Allan Luke (history@darnestowncivic.org)	Welcome:	Kendra Damiecki (welcome@darnestowncivic.org)
Membership:	Pam DuBois (membership@darnestowncivic.org)		Maya Miloski (welcome@darnestowncivic.org)
Safety Committee:	Dick Jurgena (safety@darnestowncivic.org)		Melissa Mostrom (welcome@darnestowncivic.org)
Seneca Forest Project:	James Wheeler (deer@darnestowncivic.org)	Zoning:	Tim Mueller (zoning@darnestowncivic.org)
Social Events:	Stephanie Kunkle (social@darnestowncivic.org)		

## DCA Membership Renewal / Application Form

Membership Category, please check one: ☐ Basic \$35 ☐ Friend \$50 ☐ Sponsor \$100 ☐ Acorn \$150

Please indicate how you would like to have your name(s) appear in the annual membership listing:  
(if you leave the line blank we will use your first and last names, to opt out see below)

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Partner First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Partner Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

1st E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Make Check Payable to: **Darnestown Civic Association**  
Mail to: **14132 Darnestown Road, Suite B**  
**Darnestown, MD 20874**

The following section allows you to opt-out of having information related to your members published by the DCA. If you would like your information listed in *The Little Acorn* or in a DCA Directory you can skip this section.

The DCA publishes a list of our paid members in *The Little Acorn*, please check below if you do not want your information provided:

☐ DO NOT publish my name in the Little Acorn membership listing.

The DCA occasionally publishes a directory for its membership, please check below if you do not want your information provided:

☐ DO NOT publish my name and contact information in the DCA directory.

Emails are not published and only used to communicate DCA related information with our community.



**Darnestown Civic Association, Inc.**

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

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