

# THE DARNESTOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION darnestowncivic.org

Volume 60 Number 4 December 2023

# **President's Corner**

## Note from the President

By Scott Mostrom



I think most of you are familiar with the feeling—that feeling when you join an organization or contribute to a cause that you care about. You're no longer sitting on the sideline; instead, you are a part of it. You contribute financially but more impor-

tantly that organization or that cause is now proudly a part of your identity, and you are helping to make a difference.

I want to thank those households and businesses who joined the DCA this past year and are a part of what we're doing to foster and protect the one thing that we all share and have in common—our community. Not just any community, Darnestown. The DCA cannot do what it does without your support—literally. Memberships account for more than 99% of our income, funding our advocacy efforts, more than a dozen social events throughout the year, flags and holiday lights, as well as our communications, including our bi-weekly e-newsletters and *The Little Acorn*.

One of the aspects of the DCA that's always been interesting to me is that while we're funded by voluntary membership, which is typically about 1/3 of Darnestown residents, our mission and our activities service all of Darnestown. I'm in my fifth year as President and my philosophy has always been to prove our value to the community first, then ask for membership. The DCA is doing more now than we have ever done for our residents and the spirit and pride of community. As the walls of development heighten at our borders, we are taking the proactive steps to protect our rural residential way of life for generations to come.

For those who supported us in 2023, I encourage you to renew for 2024. If you didn't but believe in what we're doing and want to be a part of it, I encourage you to join us. Please visit darnestowncivic.org/membership.

On behalf of all the volunteers in the Darnestown Civic Association, we thank you again for your ongoing support and look forward to serving you in the new year. Have a wonderful Holiday Season!

## What's Happening in Darnestown

Further details can be found in this issue.

January 6; February 2, 9, 2024 Seneca Academy Open House See page 13 for details www.SenecaAcademy.org

January 15–31, 2024 Butler Camp Registration Opens See page 12 for details and a special code www.ButlerCamp.org

January 24, 2024 Seneca Aademy Parenting Series "Navigating Friendships and Playground Politics" For more information and to register, go to www.SenecaAcademy.org/parenting

January 29 | 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Butler Montessori Middle & High School Open House See page 12 for more information www.ButlerSchool.org

February 1, 2024 Deadline for the March issue of *The Little Acorn* Email ideas, questions or articles to acorn@darnestowncivic.org

April 18, 2024 Seneca Aademy Parenting Series "Parenting in the Digital Age" For more information and to register, go to www.SenecaAcademy.org/parenting

## Darnestown's 52nd Annual Hoedown

The 52nd Annual Hoedown in Darnestown was another fun-filled event! On Friday, October 6th, more than 150 neighbors gathered at Smokey Glen Farm to dance, mingle, and feast on chicken, ribs, soup, salads, and pies. The square dancing portion of the evening was called by our long time caller, Mac McCall and the night ended with live music from Billy and Boogie who brought the energy and rocked the pavilion. This cherished Darnestown tradition continues to be a favorite night of the year for many neighbors. We are already excited for next year's hoedown. Be on the lookout for the 2024 date coming soon!





## Santa Mailbox

Darnestown's Santa Mailbox is out for the holidays! The mailbox is in Heritage Park (next to Harris Teeter) and will be accepting letters until December 24th. Be sure to stop by and mail your letters to Santa in the North Pole.



Remember: You can view *The Little Acorn* online in full color and with clickable links.

Go to darnestowncivic.org/ little-acorn/

## Darnestown Veterans Honored, Recognized and Thanked

On Friday, November 10th, the Darnestown Civic Association and the Darnestown Presbyterian Church co-hosted the annual Veterans Day breakfast for all Darnestown Veterans and their families. The breakfast was donated by Roy Rogers and Operation Second Chance (www. operationsecondchance.org), a non-profit organization supporting veterans and their families. With more than 50 people in attendance,



veterans were honored, recognized and thanked. Thank you Darnestown veterans for your service and sacrifice.



## Coming Soon to Darnestown Village

By Pam DuBois

American Martial Arts Academy is coming to 14120 Darnestown Road (former Surrey space) in late winter/early spring. The American Martial Arts Academy has been operating in the Kentlands for 20 years providing kids, teens and adults with martial arts education and coaching. Check out their website for more information: https://kentlandstkd.com.



## It's in The Bank, Really!

**Pop-Up Estate Sale** in the former SunTrust Bank location at 14112 Darnestown Rd. in the Darnestown Center. Sale will be held December 15th and 16th (10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.) and December 17th (10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.). Designer furniture and décor, jewelry, artwork, items for entertaining, Christmas decorations and more. Photos at **www. greaterwashingtonestateservice.com** after November 30th.

### **\* \* \* \* ATTENTION DARNESTOWN RESIDENTS \* \* \* \***

## Seneca Road & Esworthy Road Intersection Improvements

Montgomery County Department of Transportation is expected to schedule a public meeting in the second half of January to discuss their proposal for spot improvements to the intersection. We'll include the date, time, and place in our every other Thursday email newsletter as soon as we know. To add yourself to the mailing list, open the camera app on your mobile device and point your camera at the QR code here. Your phone will recognize the code and take you to the form to sign up.



#### PLEASE

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## 4th Annual Menorah Lighting

By Stephanie Kunkle

The first candle of the Darnestown Menorah was lit on Thursday evening December 7th kicking off eight nights and days of Hanukkah. Thank you to the Gertz family for leading the first blessings this year. Happy Hanukkah to all our wonderful Jewish friends and neighbors!





Photos courtesy of I. J. Hudson

## Santa Visits Darnestown

By Stephanie Kunkle

After some last minute changes to the schedule, Santa made his annual visit to Darnestown on Saturday, December 9th. For nearly 3 hours, neighbor Scott Stone drove a fire engine around town with Santa not far behind. Neighbors lined the streets waiting for the "Big Man" to arrive. Candy canes and toys were distributed to the hundreds of children (both young and old) who gathered for the parade. Later that evening, Darnestown gathered for hot chocolate and cookies, and welcomed Santa to Heritage Park with caroling and cheers from the children. Santa used his magic dust to light the Darnestown Christmas tree for the season. Merry Christmas, Darnestown!





## **Darnestown Historic Home Tour**

On December 9, 2023, the Darnestown Community celebrated the season with our first annual holiday home tour. The tour featured two special historic homes, each of which played an important role in the formation of the Darnestown/Germantown community and Montgomery County, overall. Each room on the tour was professionally decorated for the holidays by talented local floral designers in their own unique style and theme, showcasing the creativity and spirit of the holiday season.

## **About the Homes**

**Pleasant Hills Farm:** Pleasant Hills plantation was built in 1765 by Charles Gassaway and originally encompassed 1700 acres which later became Spring Meadows and a large part of Darnestown. Charles married Ruth Beall. Their daughter, Elizabeth Gassaway married William Darne, who established Darnestown in 1798. The property was later known as Kelley Farm when John T. Kelley acquired it in 1864. During the Civil War, the residence and grounds were used as an encampment for the Union. Today, the property is owned by Steve and Amy Kurtenbach, who operate a flower farm on the property, also named Pleasant Hills Farm.





**Giving Tree Farm:** The original portion of the John Hanson Gassaway House was built in 1812 and purchased by John Gassaway, a cousin of Charles Gassaway, in 1872, with additions made that year as well as 1894 and 1897. John Gassaway was an influential figure in Montgomery County during the 19th century. Until recently, the home was owned by the Warfield family, who completed extensive renovations to return the home to its grandeur as one of the best examples of Montgomery County mid-century farm homes. Residents Craig Wagoner and Debra Massaro, will soon be opening Giving Tree Farm, an event venue on the property.



Thank you to the floral designers Lisa Ruf, Meg Owen, Ellen Seagraves, Tonya Jones, Sue Tendall, Stephanie Egly, and Nesa Nazemi for making the rooms come to life with your floral arrangements. And a special thank you to Steve and Amy Kurtenbach and Craig Wagoner and Debra Massaro for opening your beautiful homes for this special event.

## A Brief History of the Ridgefield Neighborhood

#### By David Danoff

Since moving to the area in 2011, I had often wondered about what was here before. Using Montgomery County land records, subdivision plats, historic maps, census records, newspaper stories, and other sources, I have been able to assemble a history of the Ridgefield neighborhood. The following article is a summary of an extended series that originally appeared in the Ridgefield neighborhood newsletter throughout 2023. To read the full series and learn about the resources used to research this article, go to **https://darnestowncivic.org/little-acorn**/.

\* \* \*

In the late 18th century, the future Ridgefield neighborhood was part of a larger holding owned by Edward Jones, a Revolutionary War veteran whose family had immigrated from Scotland. The land was sold by his heirs in 1829 to a woman named Eleanor Buxton, and that seems to be when the earliest part of the farmhouse was constructed. It consisted of a 30 by 17 foot log cabin with chimneys at either end, a single large room on the main level, and two small bedrooms in a loft upstairs. The land seems to have been heavily forested, with timber harvesting serving as a main source of income.

Eleanor Buxton sold the property to a woman named Rebecca Hurley in 1836. After Rebecca's death in 1839, the land was inherited jointly by her young grandchildren, Isaiah Soper and Eliza, who married Samuel Higgins, a widower with several young children, when she was about 22.

Being a few years older than his sister, Isaiah apparently took possession of the land first and was living there with his wife and children in the early 1850s. In 1856, Eliza and Samuel filed a lawsuit against Isaiah and his wife, demanding an equal division of the property. The court ruled that Isaiah and his family should receive the slightly smaller northern section, while Samuel and Eliza should receive the southern portion and the farmhouse.

Isaiah and his wife built a new farmhouse for themselves, where they lived for more than 60 years, farming and raising six children. A document lists among Isaiah's personal property: one horse, a dozen pigs, four sheep, two calves, plus crops of corn, wheat, rye, oats, grass, and potatoes. After the death of his wife, Isaiah finally FARM FOR SALE.

I am desirous of selling my farm near Darnestown. This desirable place contains 120 acres of land, is divided into five fields, all which have been limed, two of the fields baving been limed twice. There is a stream of running water in each field, and two fine young orchards, in full bearing, on the place. For further information call on SAMUEL HIGGINS,

Darnestown, Montgomery county, Md. feb 21-tf

Samuel Higgins ran this notice repeatedly in the Montgomery County Sentinel during 1896 and 1897, right up until his land was seized and auctioned off.

sold his land in 1919 to a grandson of Frederick Tschiffely, owner of the estate that is now the Kentlands.

Meanwhile, Samuel and Eliza Higgins did not hold onto their portion of the land quite as long. After farming for about 30 years, raising Samuel's older children and a daughter of their own, Samuel and Eliza suffered a series of personal and financial challenges. Samuel lost his leg in a farming accident in 1874. Eliza suffered a serious illness in 1885. They took out a \$2,000 mortgage in 1888, which they were unable to pay back. The land was eventually seized and auctioned off in 1897, leaving Samuel to end his days living with his son, who had purchased property nearby and owned a house that still exists in the north of the Bondbrook neighborhood. Eliza had died a few years earlier.

\* \* \*

Both Isaiah Soper and Samuel Higgins were enslavers. Records from the 1850s and 1860s name the men, women, and children who were enslaved by them, and who most likely lived and worked on the land that became the Ridgefield neighborhood.

One of these women was named Lethe Matilda Green. While it divided the rest of her property evenly between her two grandchildren, the will of Rebecca Hurley specifically bequeathed one enslaved girl to her grand-

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Gary Green and Lethe Matilda Green

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daughter Eliza. (Matilda and Eliza were almost exactly the same age.) Matilda would remain enslaved by Eliza, and then by Eliza's husband, until emancipation. Then, with her husband Gary Green (who had been enslaved by a relative of Samuel Higgins), she settled nearby, purchased property, and raised nearly a dozen children. She became a pillar of the close-knit local black community and lived to be nearly 85.

The Ricks/Hallman family were another prominent part of the local black community, with several connections to the Green family. Descended from Martha Ricks, who purchased a parcel of land near the corner of Riffle Ford Road and Darnestown Road in 1882, the Hallman family still owned this land until 1995. The street that accesses their land today is called Hallman Court.

Many of the Greens, Ricks, and Hallmans are buried behind the Pleasant View Methodist Episcopal Church on Darnestown Road. This church was built in 1888 to serve the area's black residents. In 1968, members of the Pleasant View church voted to merge with two local white churches that were also suffering from dwindling membership. The new integrated congregation became Fairhaven United Methodist Church, which was constructed on land that had once been part of the Higgins farm—where Matilda Green was once enslaved.

\* \* \*

After Samuel Higgins defaulted on his mortgage, his land passed through several hands before ending up with the Cissel family in 1898. The farmhouse was expanded around this time, adding a two-story Victorian-style addition with a wrap-around porch and gable roof.

Albert Cissel and his wife, Lula Mae, inherited the land from his parents in the 1920s. They operated a dairy farm with as many as 90 head of cattle. They also purchased the former Isaiah Soper property from the Tschiffely family, reuniting the two farms and creating the complete outline of what would become the Ridgefield neighborhood.

A fire destroyed one of his barns in 1955, apparently set intentionally by a teenage farmhand. After that, Albert began to sell off his cows and milking equipment. Pepco acquired the right-of-way for their transmission line corridor in 1958, cutting a 20-acre swath through the Cissels' land. The Cissels sold their remaining land to a developer in 1963, and the first houses were built in 1966.

The old farmhouse became a private residence, surrounded by the homes on Green Meadow Road. But after falling into disrepair, it was sold, demolished, and replaced with three new houses in 2002.



Two pictures of the former Cissel farmhouse, c. 1975.

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

Deadline for the next issue:

**February 1, 2024** 

Email ideas, questions or articles to: acorn@darnestowncivic.org

# **Community News**

## Wedding Bells!

## Lowry N. Coe, III (Pepper) and Nicole Marie Barbuto

Janice Coe, Darnestown resident for over 40 years, and her Partner, Keith W. Sinner announce the marriage of their son, Pepper Coe to Nicole Barbuto of New Jersey. (Pepper's biological father, Lowry N. Coe, Jr., passed away in 2011).

The bride's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Michael Atwood and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Barbuto. All reside in New Jersey.

The wedding took place on July 17, 2023 at Castello Xirumi Serravalle in Sicily, Italy, with over 120 family and friends in attendance.

Attendants to the wedding included: Best Men, Christopher Long of Raleigh, North Carolina (Pepper's brother) and Colin Jones of Tampa, Florida. The bride's sisters, Michaela and Brittney Barbuto, were the Maids of Honor.

Pepper and Nicole met at their first jobs in Washington, DC and have been friends for almost 10 years. Pepper graduated from Quince Orchard High School in 2007 and



from the University of Tennessee in 2012. Nicole graduated from Old Bridge High School in 2008 and from Colgate University in New York in 2012.

After a 3-week honeymoon on safari in Africa, they returned to their home in Tulsa, Oklahoma and subsequently moved to Saint Petersburg, Florida.

Their beautiful and most loved Shar Pei—Ziggy Coe—was not able to attend the festivities due to travel restrictions.

# Organizations

## Troop 1094 News

Jason Woodman has recently earned Eagle Scout with Darnestown based Troop 1094.

For his Eagle Scout project, Jason organized 63 volunteers who planted 391 native straight species pollinator plants at the entrance to Stevens Park off Wootton Avenue near Collier Circle in Poolesville. Residents and visitors are very excited about this beautiful habitat and frequently post comments and photos on Facebook. The 0.5-acre habitat is a beautiful source of flowers and a new home for wildlife including a variety of pollinators—butterflies, birds, and bees—a true success story of reintroducing local species.

Jason has also been awarded the National Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Conservation Medal based on the pollinator habitat project, and a second conservation project he is now implementing. The award was presented by Leslie Gruis, Regent of Hungerford's Tavern



Jason Woodman earns Eagle Scout and is awarded the National Daughters of the American Revolution Conservation Medal

Chapter, during a ceremony in which Jason spoke about his conservation projects to chapter members.

Jason says that it has been an amazing honor to be 16

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## **Organizations (continued)**

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and recognized as an Eagle Scout and by the DAR national organization for the pollinator habitat for which he has devoted 187 hours of time.

Jason is simultaneously working on the BSA Scout's Distinguished Conservation Service Award (DCSA) which is a rare award given to a Scout who has completed and maintained two environmental projects that make a lasting conservation impact. He is now starting work on his 2nd conservation project which has been approved by the Town of Poolesville and the BSA Scouts National Capital Area Conservation Committee.

In addition to his Eagle project, Jason has completed 85 Merit Badges which is an outstanding number. Consistent with his enjoyment of the outdoors and conservation, he reports that animal science and scuba diving were among his favorite earned Merit Badges.

Jason is a junior at Pooleville High School.

## **Darne Bloomers Garden Club**

#### By Tracy Lang

The Darne Bloomers Garden Club kicked off our first meeting of 2023-2024 on September 14th, with an alfresco breakfast at Rocklands Farms. Newly appointed Programs Chair, Nancy Kaplan, and Assistant Chair, Mary Rill, presented an overview of the upcoming year's activities, which include presentations on dried flowers, and climate change and gardening, as well as

several hands-on activities, a service project, and a planned field trip to Ladew Topiary Gardens in Monkton, MD for our annual May luncheon. In addition, Kathy Jentz, author of Groundcover Revolution will be our guest at our February meeting, and Claudia Kousoulas, author of Private Gardens of the Potomac and Chesapeake, will be our guest at the March meeting. Following the meeting,



Rocklands Arrangement



Dried Flower Wreath

members were given a tour of the Rocklands Winery.

At our October Meeting, held at Bretton Woods Recreation Club, member Amy Kurtenbach of Pleasant Hills Specialty Flower Farm located in the Spring Meadows neighborhood, provided details on flower drying methods, including tips for success, along with some examples of completed projects. While Amy is mainly a purveyor of gorgeous fresh flowers, she told us that she has recently become interested in dried flowers as well. Amy provided details of the results, as well as examples of the flowers obtained, from her experiments with different drying methods, including traditional methods, such as hanging flower bunches and pressing, and more modern methods including drying with silica and using a commercial dehydrator. She also provided tips on when to cut flower for drying (at peak bloom, when flowers are full and fresh) and a list of the some of her favorite flowers for drying, including larkspur, penstemon, peony buds, sunflowers, and yarrow.

For our November meeting, the club will meet at Potomac Garden Center for a hands-on activity creating holiday swags from purchased and foraged foliage. In December, Master Gardner Irene Ecklund will give a presentation on the impacts of climate change on gardening.

The Darne Bloomers Garden Club met second Thursday of every month from September through May, typically at Bretton Woods Recreation Club. If you are interested in visiting with us or becoming a member, please email us at **Darnebloomers@gmail.com**. You are also welcome to visit our website at **www.darnebloomers.com**. Happy Gardening!

# **Organizations (continued)**

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DARNESTOWN SWIM & RACOULT CLUB What is Going on in the Offseason? Memberships, Swim, Camp, Tennis, Pickleball & Social Events

By Aleks Schiff

# With the 2023 season behind us, we turn our focus to offseason activities and club maintenance.

Planning for next summer is already in progress, and the Board is working hard to bring some new improvements to our Club, including a brand new exciting slide for our diving well and a multi-purpose under-roof gazebo space that can be used for many activities from camp to birthday parties.

All racquet sports will continue as long as the weather



stays manageable, the **Social Events** team keeps things exciting with another successful 4th *Annual Doggie Dip*. **Camp Green Zone** is happy to announce another year with Alyssa's leadership as Camp Director for 2024, with regis-

tration opening by the end of January. **Demon Swim Team** is looking forward to another winning season with Coach Pat!

Our **Membership** waitlist continues to grow, and the off-season is the perfect time to think about joining. Make sure you connect with us on Facebook, IG and website to keep up with the latest information!

We are a year-round active community with tennis, pickleball, swim, camp, and social events throughout the year. And, if you apply now for a 2024 membership, there is a very good chance you will have a membership by next summer! So, get on the waitlist today. More details on all our programming are at www.dsrclub.com.

Connect with us for the latest updates! Facebook: @DarnestownSwimRacquetClub Instagram: @DSRClub GM@dsrclub.com • 301-330-1340 15004 Spring Meadows Drive, Darnestown

## HarvestShare & Our Lady of the Visitation Parish Partner to Fight Local Food Insecurity

HarvestShare is a local nonprofit committed to reducing food insecurity in Montgomery County. We do this by collecting produce from residential and community gardeners, growing in our own grow-to-donate Giving Garden, supporting other groups' Giving Gardens with education and resources, and educational gardening events. In addition, we rescue produce through gleaning (harvesting the remaining produce after commercial farms have finished their harvest) at farms and orchards and by collecting and donating unsold produce from farmer's markets.

Darnestown has had a HarvestShare collection site since 2020 when HarvestShare began, and collected just shy of 1000 lbs over the first 3 years. This year, HarvestShare partnered with Our Lady of the Visitation Parish (OLVP) who collected over 2400 lbs, raising our Darnestown lifetime total to 3350 lbs donated to area food pantries to feed our larger community. Amazing!



OLVP hosted weekly collections, donating almost 2000 lbs of produce to St Martin's Food Pantry, in addition to abundant dry goods donations. The parish gleaned at Butler's Orchard, collecting an additional 470 lbs of apples and peppers to donate to Gaithersburg Cares. In July and August, they were averaging a whopping 229 lbs per collection! Next year, OLVP plans to continue the collection AND start their own Growing Garden which HarvestShare is excited to support.

Across the county, HarvestShare collected 21,000 lbs of Continued on 11

# **Organizations (continued)**

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produce this year with a quarter of that from grow-to-donate gardens and over a third from Montgomery Parks Community Gardens (some with dedicated donation plots) and the county's Grown@Pope donation garden. Some of the other organizations supported by Harvest-Share include MUM (Midcounty United Ministries), Nourishing Bethesda, Gaithersburg CARES, Rainbow CDC and Here2Help. Over the 4 years since we started, HarvestShare is proud to have donated over 59,000 lbs of produce to area food assistance providers.

If you are interested in supporting HarvestShare with a donation or to volunteer, or to learn more about what we do, visit our website at **www.harvestshareMD.org** or contact Dara at **dara.ballow@gmail.com**.

## **Molly's ASAP Events**

By Molly Lichtenstein

"For truly we are all angels temporarily hiding as humans." —Brian Weiss

Well, Mr. Weiss is not wrong about every one of you! I really don't have the appropriate words to express my gratitude for everything you all have done for me, for my family, for ASAP, and for Chiari and Syringomyelia patients.



Molly's ASAP Walk and Roll for a CURE 2023!

Molly's 9th Annual ASAP Walk & Roll for a Cure, Molly's 6th Annual Mulligan: a golf tournament supporting ASAP, Molly's Amazing ASAP Auction, and Molly's Match were all TREMENDOUS SUCCESS!!! It absolutely blows me away and I am at a loss for words. For 2023, Molly's ASAP Missions (all of these amazing events) made \$67,606! I don't really know how to even comprehend this. Just to give you a little background, When we first started fundraising in 2009, I read numbers



Molly's 6th Annual ASAP Mulligan!!!

as "one and three zeros". ALL of it was a lot and ALL of it was AMAZING. Well, here we are in 2023, raising more than triple what we started out raising. But let me explain something to you. ALL of it **IS** a lot and ALL of it **IS** AMAZING! Lots has changed, but the sheer feeling of pure gratitude will ALWAYS be something that sticks with me. And I hope I am able to express to each of you!

ASAP works toward accomplishing its mission by funding research. ASAP's goals include: increasing public awareness of the existence of the disorder and its devastating effects; financially supporting research efforts and raising funds to find all causes, to develop new treatments and to improve existing treatments coordinating the efforts of organizations working towards improving the lives of people with Syringomyelia and/or Chiari. With your help, ASAP has been able to fund research in many different areas. This research is leading to better treatments for Chiari and Syringomyelia and one day a cure!

I am so grateful for your support in my fight, in OUR flight!

## Join the DCA!

You can register for a DCA membership online by going to **darnestowncivic.org** or by scanning the QR code here.



Or you can join by mail by using the form on page 19!

# Schools

## **Butler Montessori**

Serving Infants-High School Students

www.ButlerSchool.org

#### January 15–31: Butler Camp Registration Opens!

Join us for nature-filled adventures this summer. Psst...exclusively for our Darnestown neighbors, use ACORN code for \$50 off a camp session when you sign up in January! Don't Delay—sessions fill up quickly!! www.ButlerCamp.org.



# January 29 at 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.: Middle & High School Open House

Attention Parents of 4th-8th Graders! *Are you seeking a transformative and supportive Middle & High School experience for your child*? Join us on January 29 for Butler Montessori's Middle & High School Open House! Bonus: no school for MCPS—bring your child!

Get a personalized tour where you'll meet our incredible students, explore our beautiful 22-acre campus,



learn about our academic and micro-economy programs, and discover our unique experiential opportunities like international travel, year-long internships, and entrepreneurship. Our dedicated teachers are ready to meet you, and you can even visit our student-run farm.

Have questions? We've got answers! This is a golden opportunity for parents of 4th–8th graders to see the incredible possibilities awaiting your child in Middle and High School at Butler Montessori! Secure your spot by visiting **www.ButlerSchool.org/highschool** or **www.ButlerSchool.org/middleschool.** 

## **Georgetown Hill Early School**

By Nicole Reap

It's that time of year again when cold and flu season is upon us. Many of our parents have asked us how we can keep our little ones and families healthy this winter. At Georgetown Hill, our top priority is to keep our kiddos safe and healthy. Our staff sanitizes all surfaces and toys several times a day. We teach the children to wash their hands properly, using warm water and soap, for at least 20 seconds. Children are asked to wash their hands upon arrival, before meals, after outside play, and of course, after using the bathroom. Another way to keep your child healthy is to make sure they



Georgetown Hill students learn how to keep bodies healthy through nutrition and exercise

# **Schools (continued)**

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are sleeping at least 10 hours per night and eating a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, proteins and grains. To prevent germs from spreading, we teach children to cough and sneeze into their elbows or tissue and turn away from their friends.

In November, many of our classes learned about keeping our bodies healthy through nutrition and exercise. We made healthy smoothies and ate "the rainbow" of fruits and vegetables. The children practiced yoga and mindfulness, and even practiced meditation!

If you would like more information about our school, please call 301-284-8144.



## **Darnestown Elementary School**

### By Parker Silverman, 4th Grade Student

Darnestown Elementary School is rocking this year. There are tons of new faces at DES, with many new students, several new staff members, and tons of upcoming events. Mr Jain, our new principal, and Ms. Nance, our new assistant principal, are very glad to be here at Darnestown. They are working hard and making Darnestown Elementary School better than ever before. The PTA sponsored Pumpkin Palooza with Team Parents winning the pumpkin drop, soccer in the field and pumpkin treats that will make your mouth water. In November, there was the annual book fair, an event liked by a lot of students who enjoyed reading funny and spine chilling new books.

Now let's have a poem from our writer of this article:

The year started off at the end of August when it was still blazing hot and in a snap it switched to November with outside being the chilliest ever. We can't forget DES news providing the stories of the month. Second and fifth graders went to Strathmore to hear the musical orchestra while fourth graders went to Calleva Farm to see the animals and plant some crops. This year at Darnestown Elementary School has been outstanding so far and I'm sure much more outstanding things are soon to come.

## **Seneca Academy**

As part of Seneca Academy's integrated IB curriculum, our students extend their learning on field trips! So far this year they have visited the Museum of Illusions and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., Farm at Home in Poolesville, Kids Play Gallery in Gaithersburg, the Chesapeake Watershed here in Montgomery County, Gaver Farm in Frederick, and the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore. There are many more exciting field trips in store in the coming months!



Seneca students visit the Museum of Illusions

Field trips are one of the many ways we implement our inquiry-based, transdisciplinary, experiential curriculum! To learn more, please join us at an upcoming Open House on January 6, February 2, or February 9. Visit **www.SenecaAcademy.org** to learn more!

The Seneca Academy Parenting Series hosted by child psychologist, Dr. Michelle Parker, continues! Save the date for our last two FREE workshops of the school year: "Navigating Friendships and Playground Politics" on January 24 and "Parenting in the Digital Age" on April 18. To learn more or register please visit: https://www.senecaacademy.org/parenting.

## Churches



## **Darnestown Presbyterian Church**

Christmas Eve Services! In addition to our 10:30 a.m. Sunday service that we'll hold that morning, we will also have two services later on Christmas Eve. Our **5:00 p.m.** Family-Friendly Worship Service is geared towards families with younger children, and features plenty of music, stories, and candles. Our **8:00 p.m. Candlelight** Service is a more adult-oriented service featuring glorious music from our Chancel and Bell Choirs. But as always, the heart of this service is the sharing of candlelight in our darkened sanctuary, symbolizing the sharing of our light with the world. Please join us this year as we celebrate the glory of Christmas!

Worship And Live-Streaming Each Sunday. We worship at 10:30 a.m. each Sunday, usually preceded by Christian Education at 9:00 a.m., and we love to welcome visitors to our child-friendly services. Check out our services on YouTube (search for "Darnestown Presbyterian Church"), and check our church website for worship times and other updates: http://www.darnestownpc.org/.



**Fairhaven United Methodist Church** 

12801 Darnestown Road • Gaithersburg, MD www.fairhavenumcmaryland.com

Hybrid Worship Sunday Mornings at 10:30 a.m. Join

us for worship in the sanctuary or via Zoom. Our service is fully interactive for those at home and at the church. Our Gospel, Sanctuary and Handbell choirs offer special music throughout the year. Holy Communion is celebrated on the 1st Sunday of every month and at other special Sundays. The Zoom link can be requested from our church administrator, **fairhavenumc@gmail.com**. Our Advent-Christmas theme is *How Does a Weary World Rejoice?* Come, rejoice with us!

# Christmas Eve Worship Services—Sunday, December 24th

**10:30 a.m.**—Featuring all 3 of our choirs offering special Christmas music. Rev. Ken's meditation is "Making Room for Christ," aided by poetry, visual arts and music.

**7:00 p.m.**—Family-friendly Service: our children and youth lead us in a celebration of Christ's birth featuring the pageant, *A Very Special Child*.

**10:00 p.m.**—Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols—Holy Communion will be celebrated

## **Our Lady of the Visitation Parish**

Christmas Eve Masses will be celebrated on Sunday, December 24th at 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Christmas Day Mass will be offered on Monday, December 25th at 11 a.m. Everyone is welcome!



For information on these programs and on other activities at Our Lady of the Visitation Parish, 14139 Seneca Road in Darnestown, check our website at **www.olvp.org**.



# **Business Directory**

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 at www.darnestowncivic.org under the **Community Information** tab.

6-Twelve | *Convenient Mart* 14100 Darnestown Rd, Darnestown 301-990-1700 6-12beerwinemart@gmail.com

#### Allstate | *Insurance & Financial Services* 14100 Darnestown Road, Ste. D,

Darnestown 301-670-4150 derekkaplan@allstate.com

Jennifer M Beitler, DDS PC | *Dentist* 9601 Blackwell Road Ste. 240, Rockville 301-972-0260

info@jenniferbeitlerdds.com

Melissa Bernstein Homes, RLAH, Berkshire Hathaway | *Realtor* 4600 N. Park Ave., Chevy Chase 301-908-4007 www.melissabernstein.com

#### Birchwood Lawncare | Landscape Services

13424 Haddonfield Lane, Darnestown 301-275-5417 kricci2@verizon.net

Bretton Woods | *Recreation Center* 15700 River Road, Darnestown

301-948-3357 www.bwrc.org

#### Jose Carbajal | Lawn & Landscaping, Tree removal, Snow removal, Firewood

14111 Esworthy Rd, Darnestown jose.lawnandlandscaping@ gmail.com

# Carpet & Flooring LLC | *Carpet & Flooring Services*

14115 Seneca Road, Darnestown 240-477-7260 majid@carpetandflooringcenter.com Clark Tree Services | *Tree Service* 5 Finegan Ct, Darnestown 240-560-8733 daniel@clarktrees.com

Darnestown Shell | *Gas, Convenience,* Auto Repairs 14020 Darnestown Rd, Darnestown 301-840-8515 darnestownshell@gmail.com

Darnestown Smiles | *Family* Dentistry 14128 Darnestown Rd, Darnestown 240-477-8251 mail@darnestownsmiles.com

Darnestown Swim & Racquet Club | Swim, Tennis, Summer Camp & Disc Golf Club 15004 Spring Meadows Dr, Darnestown 301-330-1340 GM@dsrclub.com

#### DB&C Home Restorations | *Kitchen & Bath Remodeling & Home Improvements* 14905 Braemar Crescent Way, Darnestown 301-641-0718 Loraine@dbchomerestorations.com

Valerie Fuster, Realtor | *Long & Foster Real Estate Inc.* 10121 River Road, Potomac 301-299-6000 vfuster@icloud.com

www.valfuster.com

Georgetown Hill Early School | *Preschool* 15120-B Turkey Foot Road 301-527-1761 www.georgetownhill.com darnestown@georgetownhill.com Johnson Chimney Service | Chimney Repair & Restoration 14115 Seneca Rd, Darnestown 301-949-1780 www.johnsonchimney.com/us/ walter@johnsonchimney.com

Kerrana Kangen |*Alkaline Ionized Water* 14115 Seneca Rd, Darnestown 301-518-9455 www.kerranakangen.com joni@kerranakangen.com

Lowe-Tillson Insurance & Associates, Inc. | *Full-Service Insurance Agency* 2403 Research Blvd. Ste. 350, Rockville 301-258-7773 www.lowetillson.com service@lowetillson.com

Noahs' Preferred Properties | *Real Estate Management* 313 Main St, Kentlands 301-674-0990 jnoah@noahsproperties.com

ohDEER | Organic Deer, Tick & Mosquito Control 833-ohDEERMoCo | 833-643-3376 MoCoMD@oh-DEER.com www.oh-DEER.com/MoCo @ohDEERMoCo

Pleasant Hills Farm | *Specialty Flower Farm* 14820 Kelley Farm Drive 240-281-2110 www.pleasanthillsfarm.com

Preferred Insurance Solutions, LLC | *Auto, Home and Business Insurance* 20030 Century Blvd, Ste. 201, Germantown 301-428-3344 ins@preferredinsurancesolutions.com *Continued on 16* 

# **Business Directory (continued)**

### Continued from 15

#### Real Computer Solutions, Inc. | *IT* and Technology Support 1 Research Ct, Ste. 450, Rockville 301-330-REAL (7325)

www.realcomputersolutions.com

# Miguel Saba Realtor | *Compass Real Estate*

12435 Park Potomac Ave Ste R-1, Potomac 240-775-0509 miguel@miguelsaba.com www.miguelsaba.com

#### Seneca Studio | Original Handcrafted Furnishings

240-812-1792 Senecastudio.com lukasz@senecastudio.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 | Swim School 353 Muddy Branch Rd, Gaithersburg 240-801-4518 ddombay@swimlabs.com

#### The Tyra Law Firm, LLC | *Estate Planning Law Office* 199 East Montgomery Ave, Suite 100, Rockville 301-315-0811 neiltyra@tyralawfirm.com

United Service Specialists | *HVAC* Services 7559 Rickenbacker Dr, Gaithersburg dispatch@calluss.com

#### Valley Mill Camp | *Camp* 15101 Seneca Rd, Darnestown 301-948-0220 www.valleymill.com evelyn@valleymill.com

Wilniq Auto Body & Mechanical Repairs | *Auto Body Shop* 14125 Seneca Rd, Darnestown 301-545-1800 www.wilniq.com autobody@wilniq.com

Windridge Vineyards | *Vineyard* 15700 Darnestown Rd, Darnestown 301-607-4399 robert@windridgefarm.com

Interested in joining this list? Please use our online application form at www.darnestowncivic.org.

# **Darnestown Schools, Organizations & Churches**

If you are a Darnestown school, organization or church and would like your name added to this list, please send your information to **acorn@darnestowncivic.org** 

### Churches

#### Darnestown Presbyterian Church 15120 Turkey Foot Rd Darnestown, MD 20878 301-948-9127 www.Darnestownpc.org 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

## Our Lady of the Visitation Parish

Father Greg Shaffer 14139 Seneca Rd Darnestown MD 20874 301-948-5536 www.Olvp.org parishoffice@olvp.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 www.Saintnicks.com

## Organizations

Boy Scout Troop 1094 sm@troop1094.org

Cub Scout Troop 436 committeechair@pack436.com

Darne Bloomers Garden Club www.Darnebloomers.com

**Darnestown Civic Association** 14100G Darnestown Rd Darnestown, MD 20874 www.Darnestowncivic.org

Girl Scout Troop 33217 troop.33217@gmail.com

**P.E.O. International** www.peointernational.org

## Darnestown Schools, Organizations & Churches (continued)

#### 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

### **Georgetown Hill Early School**

15120-B Turkey Foot Road Darnestown, MD 20878 301-527-1761 www.georgetownhill.com 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 www.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

## **Digital Newsletter**

For the most current news from the Darnestown Civic Association, a digital newsletter is sent every other Thursday. To add yourself to the mailing list, open the camera app on your mobile device and point your camera at this QR code. Your phone will recognize the code and take you to the form to sign up.



bit.ly/3uYxuXT

## HELP DRIVE THE FUTURE OF DARNESTOWN! Become a 2024 Member of the Darnestown Civic Association

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

- The Little Acorn
- DCA Hoedown
- Town Meetings
- Town Sign Maintenance
- 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
- Firetruck Santa and Holiday Tree Lighting
- Menorah Lighting
- Veterans Day Breakfast
- American Flag Program
- Holiday Flag Program
- Farmers and Artists Markets

#### Visit 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 2024 members will be listed in an upcoming issue of *The Little Acorn*.

DCA Membership Renewal/Application Form Membership Category, please check one:				
First Name				
Last Name				
Spouse/Partner	First Name			
Spouse/Partner	Last Name			
Business Name				
	· ·	ke to have your name( ar first and last names,		nual membership listing: <i>(if you</i> )
Street Address				
City				
State	Zij	o Code		
1st E-Mail Addre	ess			
2nd E-mail Add				
		ck Payable to: Civic Association		Mail to: Darnestown RD STE G stown, MD 20874
U U				to your members published by n a DCA Directory you can skip
The DCA publis	-	aid members in <i>The I</i>	<i>ittle Acorn</i> , please c	heck below if you do not want your
🖵 DO NOT pub	lish my name in	The Little Acorn mem	bership listing.	
The DCA occasi information prov		a directory for its mer	nbership, please cho	eck below if you do not want your
DO NOT pub	lish my name an	d contact information	in the DCA directo	ory.

## **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 before February 1, 2024. 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! Note that babysitters and mother's helpers must be under 21 to be listed.

#### **Babysitters & Mother's Helpers**

Esther Clark (2007) 240-328-9842

Rachel Clark (2005) 240-618-5809

Jennifer Juhring (2004) 240-575-0009

Ashley Mostrom (2003) 240-277-8526

Georgia Mostrom (2007) 240-480-8622

Melissa Szwed (2004) 301-519-0645

#### **House/Pet Sitters**

Liv Gabri (2009) 240-353-7079

Kirabo Payne (2009) 202-257-9378

Jonas Skucas (2005) 301-525-2501

### **Notary Services**

Tina Kalil 301-943-9840

Elisa Lane 301-990-2993 Editor: Publisher: Proofreader: Amber Colleran (acorn@darnestowncivic.org) Darnestown Civic Association Sarah Scherer

#### **Darnestown Civic Association**

**The Little Acorn** 

President: Vice President: Treasurer: Secretary: Trustees:

Scott Mostrom (president@darnestowncivic.org) Paul Klee (vicepresident@darnestowncivic.org) Gretchen Brown (treasurer@darnestowncivic.org) Matt Quinn (secretary@darnestowncivic.org) Scott Damiecki (trustee@darnestowncivic.org) (trustee@darnestowncivic.org) Will Lowe Kellie Hodges (trustee@darnestowncivic.org)

### **Committee Chairs**

Compliance:	Michael Gottlieb	(compliance@darnestowncivic.org)
Communications Lead:	Kellie Hodges	(communications@darnestowncivic.org)
Darnestown Village:	Pam DuBois	(village@darnestowncivic.org)
Database:	Scott Mostrom	(database@darnestowncivic.org)
Flag Program:	Tim Sanders	(flag@darnestowncivic.org)
History:	Allan Luke	(history@darnestowncivic.org)
Membership:	Pam DuBois	(membership@darnestowncivic.org)
Roads Task Force:	Michael Centrella	(rtf@darnestowncivic.org)
Safety Committee:	Matt Quinn	(safety@darnestowncivic.org)
Seneca Forest Project:	James Wheeler	(deer@darnestowncivic.org)
Social Events:	Stephanie Kunkle	(social@darnestowncivic.org)
Softball:	Dave Bivans	(softball@darnestowncivic.org)
Strategic Planning:	Tim Sanders	(strategicplanning@darnestowncivic.org)
Website:	Ben Jamieson	(website@darnestowncivic.org)
	Neil Agate	(website@darnestowncivic.org)
Welcome:	Pam DuBois	(welcome@darnestowncivic.org)
	Maya Miloski	(welcome@darnestowncivic.org)
	Melissa Mostrom	(welcome@darnestowncivic.org)
Zoning:	Miguel Saba	(zoning@darnestowncivic.org)

# Happy New Year Darnestown!

Thank you for making 2023 so memorable. We wish everyone a healthy and happy New Year! **Darnestown Civic Association, Inc.** 



14100G Darnestown Road Darnestown, MD 20874 Email: dca@darnestowncivic.org Website: darnestowncivic.org PRSRT STD U.S. Postage PAID Suburban MD Permit No. 4889

