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The Villager

Newsletter of the Davidsonville Area Civic Association

Volume 35, No. 4 P. O. Box 222, Davidsonville, Maryland 21035 November-December 2008

Celebrate the holidays in Davidsonville!

***Come and celebrate Thanksgiving Eve!
Wednesday, November 26, 2008, 7:30 p.m.***



at

Davidsonville United Methodist Church

Central Avenue, Davidsonville

hosted by Union Memorial Methodist Church
with participation of

Holy Family Roman Catholic Church and
All Hallows' Episcopal Church

Come to meet your neighbors, sing some hymns, hear some words of wisdom, give thanks for whatever your fortune may be. Then you can enjoy Thursday's dinner and football game with a clear, carefree conscience.

Christmas Party



at the Ruritan Club

**Davidsonville Community Tree Lighting
Sunday, December 7, 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm
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Remember the less fortunate among us!

Winter has hit the food banks and times are hard. All Hallows' Food Bank normally serves about 14 to 19 families, providing a bag of groceries once a week for pick-up on Monday morning. On November 17, 31 people arrived seeking help to feed their families.

On a regular basis they need things that children can enjoy eating like mac 'n' cheese and Spaghettios. An easy meal for a family can be a box of noodles and a jar of spaghetti sauce. Rice-a-Roni can add to a meal. Anytime

you see sale items, pick up something extra that the church can keep in the freezer. We also need fresh produce like cheese, milk, eggs, and butter. A bag of fruit like apples or oranges can be divided up. So when you are shopping, please remember, even in this area, people are hungry. You can leave your food donations at All Hallows' Parish House, 3604 Solomons Island Road at the corner of Brick Church Road, weekday mornings.

Gail

DACA members and their contributions

Welcome new members Michael and Kathy Mehl, and thanks for their gift to DACA in addition to paying dues. Many thanks also to Kevin and Sharon Carlton, Phyllis Dowd, and Barbara and Bob Trotter for their gifts in addition to renewing their membership dues in DACA.

Oops! *Villager* typed in the wrong name in the last issue. Jerry Walker was at the Republican National Convention in August, and he was actually seen on network television at the beginning of former Lieutenant Governor Michael Steele's speech.



Thanks for all the hard work supporting and representing Davidsonville. B.T.


Thank you for sending out the *Villager*. I had no idea DACA existed until I read it. Please keep me informed. (New resident) D.B.

And many thanks to all who have contributed their expertise for the improvement of their community over this past year, and the many years before!

In Memoriam
Timothy Desmond, Jr.
October 30, 2008
at Riva Road and Glen Isle Road




Pediatricians who
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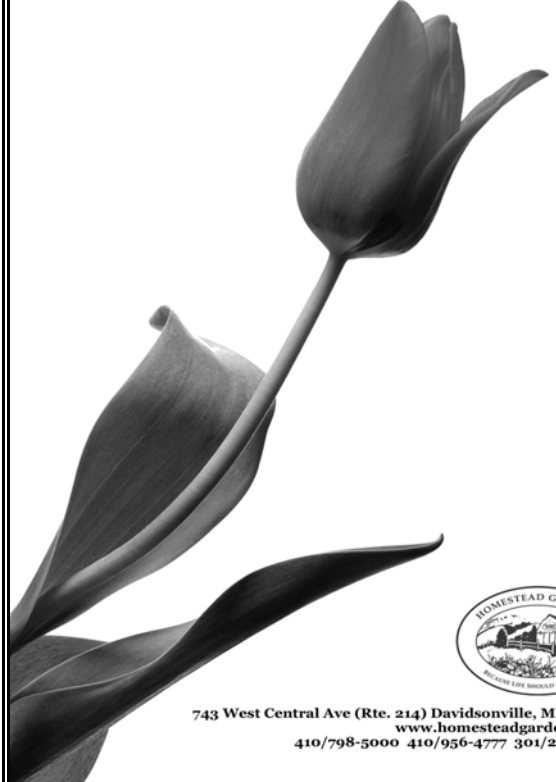


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Standing on Sands Road

Chaney Enterprises applied to the County Department of Permits and Inspections for a special exception to expand the area permitted for mining at its open pit mine on Sands Road in Harwood. The application was approved by the county, after a hearing that, partly due to poor government-mandated notification procedures, was a surprise to the local community. Under current county regulations, the county is required to notify owners of property located with 175 feet of the mine property. In this rural area of the county, many neighbors are more than 175 feet from the site in question, although they are greatly impacted by the road and traffic on it. In this case, about a dozen neighbors were notified of the hearing on the application, but they did not respond. Public notice signs were posted but apparently were not highly visible. Hearing no objections from any neighbors, the Administrative Hearing Officer granted the permit.

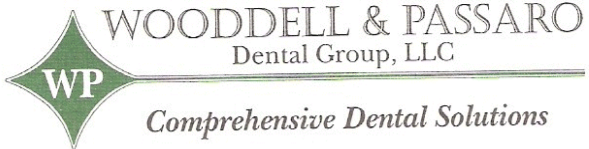
After the fact, most affected residents of Harwood learned that the permit had been granted. Seeking assistance, they contacted the Harwood Civic Association, among others, and filed an appeal against the decision, paying the filing fee of \$400. The case is now to come before the County Board of Appeals. Harwood Civic Association, in turn, notified DACA and the Lothian Civic Association, emphasizing concern with limitations imposed by regulations that do not grant

“legal standing” to organizations, only to individuals, to speak on such issues, and limit the notification of the community to a very small area around activities of interest.

DACA recognizes that “legal standing” is the issue important to all civic associations who wish to be heard and heeded in hearings. Will Biddle wrote to Mr. Leopold after DACA’s Executive Committee discussed the gravel pit matter:

“The Sands Road residents are threatened by new sand and gravel mining off Sands Roads. I have already voiced to you and our state representatives the Davidsonville Area Civic Association’s (DACA) dissatisfaction with Maryland’s current definition of legal standing. The current community outcry of the Sands Road residents underscores the inadequacy of the current wording of the law. The lives and property values of everyone who lives on that section of Sands Road will be affected by the additional traffic caused by the mining operation. In addition, sand and gravel mining can disrupt the underground water and, in turn, require residents to drill new wells or install filtration and purification systems.

“The Executive Board of DACA has discussed this issue at length, and we understand that simply increasing the footage may open up legal standing to too broad an audience while not *(please turn to page 8)*



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From DACA meeting minutes

Beautifying Davidsonville Park: Anne Biddle reported that all the shrubs and perennials have been planted at the entrance to the park on Patuxent River Road, with the help of Shawn Stallings of Davidsonville Nursery. On October 25 Shawn called her to announce the arrival of the bulbs. The next day Anne and her husband Will planted the bulbs. Their neighbor Shirley Reid saw them and stopped to help. There are now 100 daffodil bulbs planted in the first island. Hopefully this winter we can come up with a plan for the bluebird houses.

Art Huseonica, President of the Greater Crofton Council, attended DACA's November meeting to introduce himself and increase communication between DACA and GCC; with the intention of making Davidsonville residents more aware of activity in Crofton. He noted that a major concern in the Crofton area is the work on road improvements on Route #3. GCC's December 9 meeting will host SHA officials. Art praised and thanked Dave Gray for his work with GCC over the past few years.

Ed Woods reported that the realignment at Rossback and Rutland Roads is complete, changing a gentle sweeping curve into a T-shaped turn that slows traffic unduly. At DACA's October meeting, he noted residents' concerns about the proposed change to that

intersection. No one in any of the adjacent communities had any input into this plan and no advance notice of pending construction and traffic disruption was provided to the neighbors.

Ed Woods suggested that our state representatives should propose legislation to require a stop signal at #424 and Governor's Bridge Road. The problem is not with the local district office, but in the higher levels of bureaucracy, who are bound by national regulations that control federal funds for state road improvements.

New trees and fencing contribute to line-of-sight problems at Governor Bridge Road and Patuxent River Road; the fence has been hit twice already.


Construction has begun for expansion of Holy Family's education and classroom space.

Apparently the post office site, only .86 acres, is not likely to be used for anything but a post office without major changes in zoning regulations and permits. Any use that increases the number of people on the site would require an increase in septic capacity, and the property is not large enough to expand the present drain field.

Kate Fox reported that redistricting is the current major school issue. Tracey's Landing *(Next page)*

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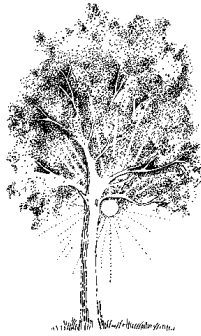
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Scalping the power lines

In the name of efficiency, BGE is continuing its cross country ram-page, clearing the trees and brush from its power line corridor up the county. On both sides of Governors Bridge Road, they left a swath of unlovely stumps and scarred earth. There must be a better way to assure uninterrupted electric power to the public.



More from the minutes

(from page 4)

Elementary is under-utilized, while Central and Lothian Elementary Schools are over capacity. It seems the Board of Education will try to relocate some of the Central Elementary pupils to Lothian, and the Lothian students to Tracey's. Davidsonville Elementary is at capacity but apparently is not affected by these proposed changes.



Catalytic converter thefts

At DACA's October meeting, Bea Poulin called attention to the police department's reports on the increase in catalytic converter thefts; it takes only two minutes for an experienced thief with a Sawz-All to cut them from the bottom of a vehicle; they are sold for the gold and other metals in them.

Catalytic converters are most commonly stolen from Toyota 4 Runner, Toyota Tacoma, Dodge Sprinter, Jeep Cherokee, and Nissan Frontier. To try to avoid losing your catalytic converter, you should park in a busy, well-lit place so your vehicle is easily visible to pedestrians and vehicular traffic, as close as possible to main entrances and video surveillance cameras. Install a car alarm with proximity sensors and pagers; install a motion sensor. Have your tag number or VIN etched on your catalytic converter. Park company vehicles left unattended overnight inside a fence. The police advise anyone who sees people "working on" cars in parking lots to call the police (911) to check on them. The County web site has a link to the police web site for more detailed information and is building a list of community association email addresses for quick distribution of police alerts. On the County's home page www.aacounty.org, the link MyArundel shows crime statistics by zip code.

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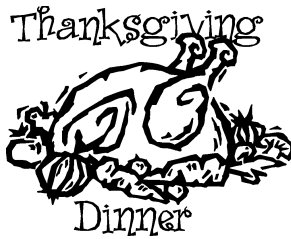
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A century-old Davidsonville family reunion

Oscar Grimes, Jr. provided the following story about his family's Thanksgiving.

Each year on the fourth Thursday of November, the Grimes family of Davidsonville gathers to give thanks to God at a feast that has been a family tradition for over a hundred years. From Virginia, Delaware, the Carolinas, and as far away as New Mexico and Oklahoma, they gather to reminisce, to catch up on the latest family news, and to meet new cousins and in-laws. Usually they have guests there also who otherwise might have been alone that day.

Oscar Fay Grimes, Jr. is one of eleven children. He and his sister Estelle Hall recount the stories their father told of the Thanksgiving meal at his parents' home when he was a child back in the 1880s. Oscar Sr. was born February 26, 1883; the *Villager* editor interviewed him in 1978 after his 95th birthday. He told his children that




all the men would leave early on Thanksgiving morning to go out hunting and by the time they returned, dinner would be ready and waiting.

Nowadays, even though not everyone can make it every year, they still need a church auditorium to accommodate the crowd. In 2007, with 110 in attendance, they roasted four turkeys, in addition to serving 50 pounds of potatoes, six large casseroles of sweet potatoes, three gallons of string beans, and various gelatin salads, applesauce and rolls. Desserts were at least a dozen pies, plus delicious brownies and cookies consumed with coffee or lemonade. Oscar and his wife Jean prepare the country ham and serve it on the same heirloom ironstone platter they have used in all the previous years.



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Tradition lost

All Hallows' Parish's Thanksgiving Dinner was a tradition dating from the 1920s until the parish hall burned in 1977. Built in 1921 under the direction of Mr. St. George Barber, it served as a center for many community activities. It was located between the Davidsonville store and the Parish Rectory on Central Avenue.

With its large kitchen, and a stage at one end of the auditorium, the hall played a major role in the social life of the community. Church-sponsored dances were held about once a month with music provided by the Naval Academy band. The churches held rummage sales and seasonal dinners as fund raisers. Deviled crabs were on the menu in August. Before the elementary school down the road was made available, the hall was used as a polling place for county, state and national elections.

The parish's biggest fund raiser was a longtime traditional Thanksgiving Day dinner that drew guests from far beyond the borders of Anne Arundel County, and involved every member of the Parish as cooks, contributors of homemade baked goods, servers and busboys. The Christ-



Art by John Quinan, 1977

mas bazaar of crafts made by the ladies of the Parish kept the Altar Guild funded for the entire year.

The hall was destroyed by fire on July 17, 1977, and the Vestry elected not to rebuild, but encouraged any other group or organization to build a new community center. This encouraged the Ruritan Club to undertake their building on Davidsonville Road.

Reprinted from *History of All Hallows' Parish*
Gail Enright



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Standing on Sands Road, from page 3

adequately covering property owners affected by zoning exceptions and changes. Existing, affected community associations should be allowed to appeal zoning exceptions as well as property owners within 175 feet. This would broaden the definition while limiting the legal liability of builders, land owners, and developers.

"The residents who live along the affected section of Sands Road, even those more than 175 feet away from the site, ought to have the right to voice their opposition to a new sand and gravel mine. It would then be up to the Appeals Board to decide if their concerns merit limiting the land owner's right to mine his property."

DACA also wrote last year to county and state representatives (Ed Reilly, John Leopold, Bob Costa, and Janet Greenip) to support granting standing to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in its appeal against the home builders on Dobbins Island and Little Dobbins

Island in the Magothy River. Both Jim Robey of Mr. Leopold's office and Ed Reilly's office encouraged DACA to pursue its concerns with the state. At that time, Delegate Bob Costa informed Will Biddle that he had actually introduced legislation to broaden the definition in 2006 but the bill had not been approved. Mr. Biddle learned that Senator Janet Greenip supports a broadening of the current law as well.

On November 2, the Harwood Civic Association wrote to County Executive Leopold and to Councilman Reilly expressing their concerns over the government shortcomings that contributed to the Sands Road community's surprise. Now HCA is seeking to pull together local civic groups to help the county, and possibly the state, adapt notification and standing regulations.

Thanks to Mike Stricker, President of Harwood Civic Association, for providing much of this information.
Gail Enright

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- Brian Ganz, pianist** Wednesday, February 18, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
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- Annapolis Symphony Orchestra** Sunday, March 29, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
Under the direction of José Luis Novo performing "Music of Spain"
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- The Music of Benny Goodman and His Orchestra** Friday, May 1, 7:30 p.m.
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Riva VFD sent its annual appeal for donations in
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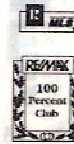
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Greg Welker wins a promotion in SHA

Congratulations to Greg Welker, District Engineer, on his promotion within the State Highway Administration. He has worked at SHA in various areas for 34 years. SHA Director Neil Pedersen announced Mr. Welker’s new position of Deputy Director/Administrator/Chief Engineer for Operations by email on November 17.

Dave Gray, DACA’s vice president, wrote to thank Greg for all his efforts on behalf of the Davidsonville Community. “We can point to improvements that without your help would not have happened. We can only hope the person who follows in your shoes will continue to work as you did with the citizens in District Five.”

Mr. Welker and his staff have been very gracious and informative when meeting with DACA on road and

transportation issues in the Davidsonville area.


Mr. Welker wrote to Dave:

“I need to let you know that I will be leaving the position of District Engineer to assume the duties of the Deputy Administrator/Chief Engineer for Operations for SHA. I have enjoyed working with all of you to improve the quality of life in Anne Arundel and Southern Maryland since I took on this position in 2001. Until such time as a new District Engineer is selected please direct any questions or concerns to the District Five Senior Staff.” DACA has met and worked with Kim Tran: Assistant District Engineer - Traffic, and Jamie Folden: Assistant District Engineer - Construction, both of whom have attended our Executive Committee meeting and our annual meeting to inform residents of transportation issues in our area.

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Memories of country pleasures at Christmas time

compiled by Ron Holland, reprinted from Villager December 1983

In colonial times, Christmas was a day for visiting and good fellowship, just as it is today. Transportation, relying on horsepower and shank's mare, limited the distance one could travel in a day, so celebrations were local, held among family members and neighbors. Christmas in Davidsonville always meant home and family.

After more than more than 200 years, Davidsonville has not changed very much the ways it celebrates the most popular of holidays. The church bazaars remain; families are reluctant to leave home and hearth; days and nights are filled with friendly gatherings, and good cheer abounds.

Mr. Tom Mayr, who lived in Davidsonville longer than most of us, recalled early twentieth century Christmases in many ways. In his youth, the tradition of "shooting in Christmas" set the air to ringing. Bright

and early Christmas morning, the man of the house would go outside and fire off a gunshot in the air. Neighbors signaled thus to each other, shattering the silence of a still winter morning. When asked why the shooter tradition persisted, Tom related that the answer, to no one's surprise, was "I guess it's to let the people know it's Christmas!"

Before Christmas trees were sold commercially in Davidsonville, a trip to the woods was in order to select "the" tree. Mr. Mayr remembered bundling up in warm woolens as a boy and searching with his family, axe in hand, for the perfect conifer. Sometimes people would get carried away by the beauty of a perfect specimen and cut a tree that belonged to someone else. He said most of the 15-foot trees near Bowie's Belair Mansion disappeared that way.

When the corner store was a general store, it served as an outlet for the wares and fare of local farmers. Paul Davis perfected the home salt-and-smoke cure for country hams and took his secret recipe to the grave with him. To anyone who tried to worm his method out of him, he would smile and agree with whatever his interrogator would suggest. If you asked him how to prepare a country-cured ham for the table, he said, "Soak it for three days, then boil it till the bone falls out." That worked if you knew what he omitted to tell you.

When the cloverleaf at Route #50 and #424 was built, it had all the beauty of bare, rutted earth. Willie Doepkens personally planted and cared for all the trees that grace this public space and one-time eyesore. He worried that once

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Christmas in the country, (from previous page)

the pines got some size to them, some individuals might figure that trees on public property were free for the taking. One year, he decided the trees needed guarding and, sure enough, he caught red-handed a guardian of the law harvesting trees for pleasure and profit. As it happens, most of the trees are still there, now too big to serve as indoor decorations, but softening the impact of Route 50 on Davidsonville, a delight to the eye and providing home and cover for countless small wild creatures.

The community Christmas tree lighting ceremony now held at the Ruritan Club's building on Davidsonville Road, originated when All Hallows Episcopal Church members gathered around the large evergreen tree in front of the Rectory on Central Avenue. They sang a few carols around the creche and were led in prayer by the rector, Rev. Gordon Fischer. Then they tramped into the Rectory for hot chocolate. As the Davidsonville Methodist and Holy Family members accepted the invitation to join them, more components were added to the festivities until it became a pageant and moved inside the Methodist Church next door. In time, it came to encompass the entire community until it was coordinated by the Ruritan Club and moved to their

building. Four neighborhood congregations — All Hallows, Davidsonville United Methodist, Union Memorial Methodist, and Holy Family Catholic — joined to lead prayers and carols at the Ruritan Hall. Homestead Gardens donated a little evergreen that has grown to great estate and continues to decorate it for the community holiday. Davidsonville Elementary School's chorus and holiday band serenaded a lively audience, and local talents presented plays based on themes of loving charity.

Time has passed and the Ruritan Club still hosts the lighting of community Christmas tree. Homestead Gardens' holiday festivities are widely known. Each church holds special services of the season. Christmas customs in Davidsonville have changed, but the spirit carries on.

**The combined choirs of
Holy Family Roman Catholic Church and
All Hallows' Episcopal Church will present
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Making a list and checking it twice!

Hospice of the Chesapeake announces holiday wish list

Making a list and checking it twice, Hospice of the Chesapeake announces its Holiday Wish List to ensure the comfort, dignity and support of its patients, clients and families in Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties.

The wish list ranges from helping to restock either of the two hospice houses to giving the precious gift of your time to Hospice of the Chesapeake. Hospice cherishes gifts of any value and will provide donors with the necessary tax deduction receipts required for charitable donations. They are seeking:

- 1) A refrigerator for the Creston G. Tate & Betty Jane Tate Foundation Chesapeake Hospice House in Linthicum.
- 2) Sets of new twin sheets/bedding.
- 3) Gently used goods to sell at Chesapeake Treasures in Severna Park including clothing, jewelry, quality furniture and household items.
- 4) A garage or storage shed for Chesapeake Treasures in Severna Park and another for the Creston G. Tate & Betty Jane Tate Foundation Chesapeake Hospice House.
- 5) In-kind donations of services such as printing, catering and event support.
- 6) Gifts of time — become a Hospice of the Chesapeake volunteer.
- 7) Monetary contributions of any value — every gift helps!

This holiday season please consider Hospice of the Chesapeake during your gift giving celebrations. For more information on additional ways to support the organization, please call 800-745-6132 or go to their web site www.hospicechesapeake.org.

Hospice of the Chesapeake improves the quality of life for those in our communities experiencing advanced illness or bereavement through hospice and other palliative care, compassionate support and education.

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