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The Villager

Newsletter of the Davidsonville Area Civic Association

Volume 36, No. 5

P. O. Box 222, Davidsonville, Maryland 21035

January-February 2010

DACA SPONSORS THE FIRST ANNUAL GREEN WEEK EXPO SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 1:00-4:00 p.m. DAVIDSONVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Come to the GREEN EXPO and learn about ways to:

- Save Energy and Money (solar, wind, geothermal, energy audits)
- Get Property Tax Credits for Stormwater Management
- How to Green your Home and Garden
- Improve the water quality of our rivers and the Chesapeake Bay
- Live a sustainable and healthy lifestyle

Expo will feature local environmental agencies and nonprofits, and local and regional businesses who offer green products or services. Among these are:

- ✧ DACA will give away trees from the Maryland State Nursery to be planted in Davidsonville.
- ✧ You will see exhibits on raingardens, and you can buy rain barrels at reduced prices.
- ✧ The Patuxent Riverkeeper will give away water testing kits and recruit volunteers for the Annual April Clean-up of the Patuxent River.
- ✧ The Master Gardeners will instruct you how to treat your yard so you don't contribute to the pollution of our streams and tributaries and have it certified "Baywise."
- ✧ A representative of Anne Arundel County will tell about recycling, not only paper and containers, but also yard waste, and you will be able to pick up compost kits there.
- ✧ Baltimore Gas and Electric will have a representative there to talk about how to save energy and to sign residents up for their Peak Rewards Program, which reduces your electric bills of participants in exchange for allowing them to interrupt your air conditioner or electric water heater during brief periods of exceptionally high demand for electricity.

More groups and merchants will present their products and projects. A complete list will be posted in the March *Villager*.

✧ For more information, go to www.DACA-MD.org or contact Will Biddle at 410-798-6719 or Lara Mulvaney at 410-956-4451.

BE THERE OR BE BROWN.

DACA members and their contributions

Welcome new member Edith James and thanks to Carmen Constable for this gift membership. Many thanks to Patty and Bill Glasgow, already life members, for their continuing generous support of DACA. Thanks also to Bo and Sandy Newport for their contribution to DACA in addition to renewing their dues; and also to Christopher Asher for his generous contribution to DACA in addition to placing an ad in the *Villager* for Merrill Lynch. Please patronize our advertisers.

After the Christmas program at the Ruritan Club, Jerry Walker sent congratulations to Chris “for a well attended and successful event. A fun time was had by all and Santa’s timing was perfect!!”

Chris wrote, “I want to thank Wayne Reid and Harlan Ray for helping set up; Ed Woods for picking up and noisily delivering Santa; and Jerry Walker not only for the very appropriate prayer but also for helping clean up. The event went just as planned and a good time was had by all.



Giving: In November DACA contributed \$2,000 to help Anne Arundel County residents in need -- \$250 each to All Hallows’ Episcopal Church, Chesapeake Christian Fellowship, Davidsonville United Methodist Church, Grace Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Holy Family Catholic Church, Riva Trace Baptist Church, South River Bible Church, and Union Memorial United Methodist Church.

DACA received gracious thanks from All Hallows, Holy Family, South River Bible Church, Chesapeake Christian Fellowship, and acknowledgments from Grace Evangelical Presbyterian and Riva Trace Baptist Church.

DACA also supports to the Davidsonville Wildlife Sanctuary, the South River Federation, the West/Rhode Riverkeeper, the Patuxent Riverkeeper, and the Chesapeake Environmental Protection Association, as well as others.

Thanks for your contribution to a wonderful community newsletter.

Carol Moore

Keep up the good work. I love the paper and all the good DACA does for Davidsonville.

Patty Glasgow

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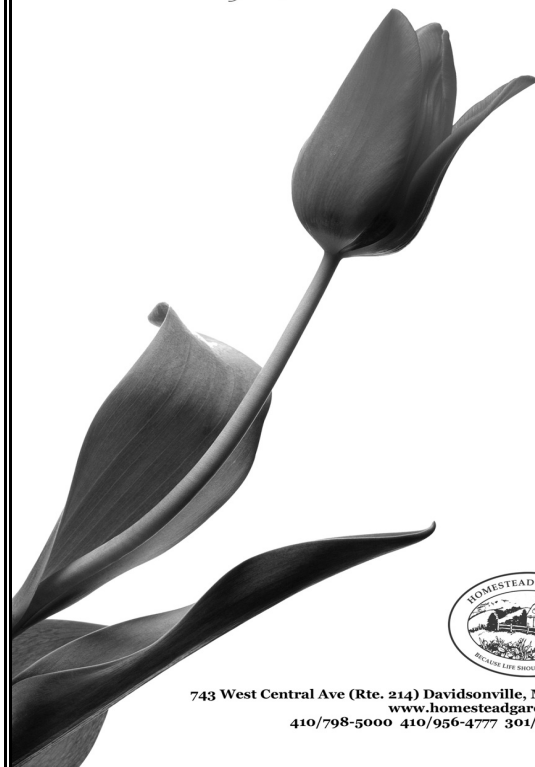
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Why should we plant trees?

By Will Biddle

We used to be called cheap. Now we're called green. We pick up bags of leaves that people leave out for pick-up, put them in the back of my truck, take them home and empty the leaves on ground that won't grow anything. We reuse the bags for trash can liners. We ask friends and neighbors for old newspapers, spread them on the ground, and pile mulch on top of the newspapers. We don't buy the mulch, we ask the tree-trimming crews to dump their loads on our property. We remulch the coarse mulch from the tree-trimming crews in our old Sears mulcher before spreading it on the newspaper.

When we moved to Davidsonville from southwestern Virginia in 1985, it was a real financial stretch to buy a house, so the house we bought left some things to be desired, like a yard with topsoil. About the only things that grew in our yard, which had been mined for sand and gravel before we bought it, were wire grass, floribunda roses, and a few sweetgum saplings. There was no way we could afford to have topsoil brought in, so we decided to make our own. In the front half of our lot, we planted trees, hundreds and hundreds of them. Most died during the dry spells. To water them, we used the grey water from the washing machine. For the back half of our lot, we bought a couple of Suffolk ewes and let them do the

mowing and fertilizing. Sheep are well suited to dry, sparse grazing land, but it was tough going for them some years. When the ewes got too old to bear lambs, we had them butchered and gave the meat to a food drive in Upper Marlboro. My wife said she couldn't eat our pets.


Even after twenty years, there was still one large area in our yard where, no matter how many leaves we tilled into the soil, the only thing that would grow was wire grass. The soil was just too sandy to hold moisture. To the detriment of much of the rest of our yard, I diverted ten truckloads of tree trimmings to this spot at the back of what had been used as the sheep pasture. I should have leveled the mulch over the area and tilled it into the ground, but I was convinced to let it rot in piles. After two years, I remulched with what I had not initially spread out, then spread the finer mulch, and tilled it into the ground. The first year after that, the garden on this ground was not good, except where I had first spread and tilled the mulch. Not even generous doses of fertilizer (270 pounds for 6,000 square feet) would make corn grow. Mulch absorbs huge amounts of nitrogen while it *(Continued on page 4)*



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Why plant trees? (from page 4)

down, but once it begins to rot, it gives back much more than it has absorbed. Left in piles, the first mulch had not rotted sufficiently. The second year, the land yielded vast quantities of corn and other vegetables with very small amounts of fertilizer (20 pounds for 6,000 SF).

After twenty-five years living on what once looked like the Sahara desert, we still need more mulch! Over the long term, there is simply nothing like tree mulch to create top soil. Manure helps, but the amount of manure needed to build up two acres of topsoil would have created a toxic waste zone. Leaves help, but three truck-loads of bagged, compressed leaves mulch into very little compost compared to one truck load of mulched branches.

It is true that the Great Plains with their legendary seven-foot-thick layer of top soil was created by rotting prairie grass over tens of thousands of years, but we didn't have that long. It is also true that most of those seven feet of top soil have blown or washed away through the carelessness of farmers. Now we're destroying the rain forests of the Amazon and of the Island of Borneo. We humans have demonstrated our capacity to destroy in a few short decades the topsoil which took thousands and thousands of years to create.

Unfortunately, there is little that Davidsonville residents can do about what happens in Brazil or Indonesia, but there is a great deal we do about what happens to the land between the South, the Rhode, and the Patuxent


Rivers. And unfortunately, we have already managed to deplete our soil, pollute these rivers, and cut down most of our forests. Unlike the Brazilians and the Indonesians, however, we live in a very forgiving climate. We can reverse the destruction of our natural resources.

Also unfortunately, few residents even recognize the destruction as they drive down the road at high speed to take their children to athletic practice or to go shopping or to commute to work. Our cars insulate us from the damage all around us. We see corn twelve feet high and we think the soil is fertile. No one stops to ask the farmer about his corn to discover that he uses tons of high-nitrogen fertilizer on his soil, frequently more than is necessary to grow his crops. No one wonders where all that excess fertilizer goes. Nor do we wonder where the hundreds of pounds of fertilizer we dump on our lawns go; that is, not until all the menhaden in the South River die from being unable to breathe in a dead zone caused by excessive run-off of nitrogen fertilizer. No one stops as they cross a bridge over a stream or river to look at the water under the bridge. If they did, they would see erosion, silted water, and virtually no living plant in the water. If the water is still, they might very well see a slick of oil floating on the surface.

(Next page please)

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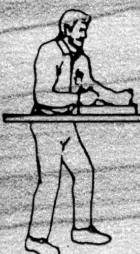


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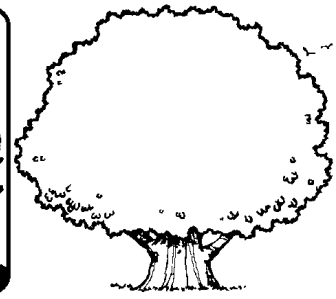
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Why plant trees? (from page 4)

Fortunately, menhaden live also in other tributaries of the Bay. Fortunately also, Eastern forests have a remarkable ability to reclaim land and make the soil productive. Only topsoil, which is rich in decayed and decaying plant matter, retains moisture. Only topsoil releases enough nitrogen to grow corn and other vegetables without the use of nitrogen fertilizer. And only trees produce enough organic matter to make topsoil, at least within our lifetimes. Planting trees and nurturing them is perhaps the most significant action residents of Davidsonville can do to restore our soil, to improve our environment, and to help the Bay.

Trees do so much more than produce organic matter to replenish topsoil. They capture huge amounts of carbon dioxide and store it in their trunks and branches. The excessive level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is the major contributor to global warming. Trees store huge amounts of water, thus reducing run-off after storms and releasing that moisture to other plants, such as grass, during dry spells. Trees also draw up water from deep in the ground during dry spells. Trees provide partial shade that most other plants, including some young trees, require during the hot dry summers of Davidsonville.

Finally, trees prevent erosion and anchor the soil on hills and along streams and rivers so it doesn't wash



away during heavy rains. Silting is a major contributor to dead zones in the Chesapeake Bay because silting covers and kills underwater grasses which convert carbon dioxide into oxygen in water. Those of you who love a grassy yard, will find that trees also improve your lawn, especially if you prune the lower limbs off flush with the tree trunk to provide high shade and light beneath the trees.

Will Biddle

LEARN MORE!

*Come to DACA's Green Week Expo
March 20, 2010, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Davidsonville Elementary School*

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Council In Action

Cathleen M. Vitale, Councilwoman, District 5

The ability of the Council to have history at their hands will be to its benefit as we begin 2010 with Comprehensive Re-zoning. December 1st marked the beginning of the application period when property owners can ask the County to re-zone their property. Ten years ago we had the benefit of the Small Area Plans. These plans, sixteen in all, were created with input from the citizens and local communities to help shape future development in the County. When I began on the Council, we were considering the first plans in Crofton and South County. As the Council considers the new requests, the reason behind a particular zoning change (or a refusal to change) as far back as 2000 will be found in the notes and files of the District 5 representative. So often I have wondered why prior Councils took various actions, I am glad that I will be able to provide information and input to my present colleagues to make the re-zoning process more manageable and transparent to all involved. As the Council hears legislation on proposed amendments (I suspect in March and April), please put it on your “watch list”. If you have an interest in a particular parcel in the County, contact Planning and Zoning to see if there is a request for change.

The County will also consider hiring preferences for county residents for public safety positions. Bill 87-09 would give to residents of Anne Arundel County the opportunity, as long as they are otherwise qualified as a preferred candidate for the police department, fire department, detention center, sheriff’s office or communications department of any public safety department. The goal of the bill would be to keep our public safety workforce close to the community that they serve.

The Council will entertain legislation concerning the zoning code and other development tools in the next several months. As the administration fine tunes the application of several state laws that passed in this year’s General Assembly session, we can expect critical area legislation, development regulations and refinement of the proper uses for various types of land around the County. As we move into our last year in office, your council remains committed to being involved and engaged in the needs of our community and county. I can assure you, this council will not be a lame duck assembly!

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OOPS!

Editor’s note: Mrs. Vitale did not write in her November-December column that the County Council made the decision to approve slots in Anne Arundel County. The approval of slots was by vote of the citizens. The Council’s task was to decide where they can be located – an ongoing discussion! The editor apologizes for this misstatement.

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All Hallows Episcopal Church Mardi Gras!
 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
 February 16, 6:00 until 8:00 p.m.
 Mayo Kiwanis Club, Carr's Wharf Road, Mayo

\$7.00 for adults and teens, \$3 for children; tickets will also be available at the door. Lots of great prizes will be up for the raffle and a silent auction to benefit the All Hallows' Youth Group. If you wish to volunteer your services or offer raffle or gift items for the silent action, please contact Molly Weems at mweems@erols.com or call All Hallows' office at 410-798-0808.

Senator Ed Reilly and Delegate James King

will host a reception for the constituents of District 33 on Monday, February 22. Delegates McConkey and Costa have also been invited.

The event will be held at the Miller Senate Office Building in Annapolis from 6:00 pm. until 8:00 pm. Appetizers and other refreshments will be served at this free event. District 33 includes Crofton, Davidsonville, South County, Severna Park, Crownsville and other areas from Odenton to the southern end of Anne Arundel County. For more information call 410-841-3561.



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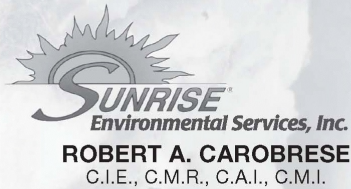
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Dedication of new spiritual life center at Holy Family RC Church

December 6, 2009

DACA Executive Committee member Jerry Walker represented DACA at the ribbon cutting ceremony at Holy Family. Prior to the actual dedication, he attended the Mass given by the Archbishop of the Baltimore Diocese, Rev. Edwin F. O'Brien. A huge congregation filled the church and stood in the narthex (foyer). The interior of the new facility is beautiful, and very functional for wedding receptions or other large community events. The congregation lingered to chat after the reception of lunch and snacks.



DACA member Jerry Walker, Father Joseph F. Barr, Pastor, and Senator Ed Reilly at the dedication of Holy Family's new spiritual life center.



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**Maryland Day at Shady Side Museum
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Come for a free tour of the historic Capt. Salem Avery Museum, 1418 E.W. Shady Side Road, and join us for afternoon tea. The free house tour will include a presentation by costumed docents on the history of tea and a demonstration of proper tea service. These tours will begin at 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

The Museum will hold two Mother Daughter Tea at 1:00 p.m. and at 3:00 pm for a fee of \$10 for a parent accompanied by one child. Other family members may join for \$2 per person. A variety of teas, hot chocolate, sweets and tea sandwiches will be offered. Guests will be served in beautiful tea cups from Mrs. Avery's collection.

The tea is part of a program organized by the Four Rivers Heritage Area with special events at a number of sites in Annapolis and South County. Maryland Day commemorates the day weary English colonists disembarked from the ships The Ark and The Dove at St. Clement's Island in southern Maryland and celebrated their safe arrival in the new world with a service of thanksgiving. In 1916 the Maryland General Assembly authorized Maryland Day as a legal holiday devoted to Maryland history.

Registration is limited, and prepaid reservations must be made by calling the Museum office at 410-867-4486. The Museum and its office are closed for the winter, so please leave a message and someone will return your call.

The Shady Side Rural Heritage Society has partnered with two Captain's Circle sponsors, BayVue Consulting, Inc., and Greenstreet Gardens in sponsoring its 2010 events.

Shady Side Museum Winter Luncheon Series

Wednesdays until February 17
Captain Salem Avery Museum
1418 EW Shady Side Road.

The luncheons begin with a program at 11:30, followed by the serving of delicious homemade soup, specialty breads, dessert, and beverage. Admission is \$17 for an individual program. Reservations are required, and may be obtained by calling 410 266 8846. This luncheon series is always a sell out.

February 10: Howard Ernst, Fight for the Bay
February 17: Melanie Lynch, Osprey on the Rebound

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How much cadmium and arsenic are in your water supply? The answer is too much! Poor regulation of the by-products of coal combustion means there are fly ash disposal sites in our communities leaching poisons into the environment that jeopardize our health and safety. Last year, residents in Gambrills, Maryland learned that their well water had been contaminated by a fly ash disposal pit operated by Constellation Energy. Recently the Patuxent Riverkeeper joined a lawsuit against another local power company that operates a similar disposal site in Brandywine, Maryland. This site is leaking toxins as much as 50 times the safe drinking water level standards into the groundwater. Citizen advocates like our group help hold the line where our regulatory system has broken down and the public health and our river are at risk.

Even so, we here at Patuxent Riverkeeper have much to give thanks for. The generous support of our members and donors over the years has allowed us to continue our work on behalf of the river we love. We engage and educate citizens with our kayak trips and other outreach, bring polluters to account with our suits, monitor and report on water quality in all sections of the river, and keep the water trail open so paddlers can enjoy the upper river.

Our plans for 2010 include vigorous pursuit of the fly ash suit, producing semi-monthly radio programs about the river and its problems, rolling out a campaign in January that identifies the ten worst polluters of the river and bringing them to account, releasing our third annual report card in March, holding the annual Patuxent clean-up in April, the Patuxent Sojourn in June, and a new Faith Paddle in September.

All this is in addition to our usual kayak and float trips, water monitoring, Roughneck work trips to keep the paddle trail open, and newsletters and other outreach.

We look forward to an exciting year, and we hope you will join us on the river or in spirit as we pursue our mutual goals.

Fred Tutman

Arundel Volunteer Fire Department

The Home Show 2010 will be held rain or shine on Saturday, March 20 from 10:00 am-4:00 pm at the fire department on Davidsonville Road.. This event is sponsored by the Chesapeake Homeowners Network and Suburban Scene for the benefit of the Arundel Volunteer Fire Department. You can enjoy booth displays, demonstration classes, food and children's activities. Admission is free. For more information visit www.Arundelfire.com.

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You are your neighbor's keeper!

On December 4, a home on Green Ash Road was broken into and robbed. A neighbor noticed a vehicle that did not belong in our community and watched as two men approached the house, kicked in the front door and carried out a flat-panel television. This home had a steel front door with a dead bolt. The neighbor immediately called the police and told the operator that the robbers were getting away. In response, the police quickly blocked both ends of Mt. Airy Road and detained the vehicle. The neighbor identified the robbers and arrests were made. As it turns out, these individuals were wanted in connection with numerous other county break-ins.

Many thanks to a vigilant neighbor who was willing to get involved.

Keep your eyes open and if you see something that does not belong - make the call to the police. Two tips:

1. Empty trash cans that are left out overnight are a signal that no one is home. Please take in your trash cans after collection. If you are going to be away, please ask a neighbor to take your trash cans in for you. The same goes for newspapers left in the driveway.
2. Another way to deter robbers is to have exterior lights consistently on after dark. Please consider putting your front porch and exterior garage lights on timers.

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From the Editor

Thanks to DACA members who have sent their e-mail address to the *Villager* editor. Among those who have done so, Martin Egna wrote: "I saw in the past issue of the *Villager* the request that members provide an email address the next time they renew their membership. I am paid up through 2012 but I'm guessing the shift to the electronic version of the *Villager* will happen sooner than 2013. So I am providing my email address."

Well, yes, it's coming, but not yet. As long as it is feasible I'll continue to send it on paper. As do many (most?) readers, I prefer to read paper. I am just now getting proficient at sending it by e-mail format to Minute-man Press, which reduces the number of production steps and makes it look better, since they can print directly from their computer to the print machine, instead of having to xerox it from my paper original.

One reason for preparing to convert the membership mailing to e-mail is that the post office will no longer allow Davidsonville to accept bulk mail, so I'll have to mail it from Annapolis, starting with this issue. Also, I seem to be a dying breed – collecting information, writing, editing, arranging ads, preparing it to print on paper – getting it to the printer, printing labels, sticking them on, and carrying it to the post office, etc. I have learned this process one step at a time over many years so it was not overwhelming. It will be a steep learning curve and very time consuming for the next person to learn it all at once. I suspect that whoever takes over the *Villager* after me will be more proficient and efficient on the computer than on paper.

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benefit and a patch designating them "Snow Patrol." Contact the Volunteer Center for Anne Arundel County, 2666 Riva Road, Suite 130, Annapolis, MD 21401, or call 410-897-9207, or log on to info@volunteerannearundel.org.

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Anne Arundel County Police Department offers winter travel safety tips

Winter weather is here and the Anne Arundel County Police Department urges county residents and visitors to be as safe as possible. In our current treacherous winter weather, temperatures can drop quickly and wet roads can become covered with ice creating hazardous conditions.

Clear all snow and ice from your vehicle. Peephole driving (only removing small areas of ice and snow) reduces visibility and increases the chance that ice or snow will dislodge and strike another vehicle while traveling.

Combine several errands into one trip and stay off the roads during a winter storm.

Reduce your speed and increase the distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you as spin-outs are common with ice and snow on the roads.

Plan ahead before traveling; check weather forecasts for inclement weather on your route.

Always check your vehicle's fluids, wipers and tire pressure before a long trip and make sure to have a full tank of gas. Keep a snow shovel, flashlights, jump cables and blankets in your vehicle.

Don't stop to pick up a stranger in distress. Simply call the police and provide them with the location of the disabled vehicle.

When traveling for a period of time, leave a contact number with a trusted neighbor and have them watch your home, retrieve your mail and shovel snow if possible.

When snow is in the forecast, get your vehicle off the street to allow snow plows to clear the roadway. You can check the status of your neighborhood road plowing at the Public Works Department's web page www.aacounty.org and follow the links to

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The *Villager* is published at least six times each year. We invite your written and signed contributions of letters, articles, and community notices.

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MEMBERSHIP: I would like to be a member of DACA and receive the *VILLAGER*. At \$5.00 for each person, enclosed is my check for \$_____, payable to DACA for membership for ___ person/people for ___ year(s). Also enclosed is my contribution of \$_____ to DACA to help with the expenses incurred in the effort to maintain the quality of life that brought us to the Davidsonville area and to help guide the growth and development of our community. Mail to: DACA, P.O. BOX 222, Davidsonville, MD 21035.

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Your comments, your interests?