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The Villager

Newsletter of the Davidsonville Area Civic Association

Volume 37, No. 2

P. O. Box 222, Davidsonville, Maryland 21035

July-August 2010

DACA's Annual Meeting, June 3, 2010

Will Biddle wrote a very informal summary of DACA's Annual Meeting, herewith interspersed with Kate Fox's very coherent and clarifying notes:

Despite the rain we had about 30 people in the audience. I was the only one to raise a hand in favor of Robert reading his entire 100 page treasurer's report.

Delegate Bob Costa, District 33b, spoke first for about five minutes, and 15 minutes of questions followed, regarding efforts to pass legal standing bills and various environmental issues, including a stormwater restoration fee. Mr. Costa stated that he has been and would be in support of legislation to define legal standing, and that he is not a proponent of a stormwater restoration fee, but that he had other ideas for this effort. Mr. Costa also discussed some of his areas of interest, and reviewed his voting record over the past few years.

County Council District Seven Representative Tricia Johnson noted that she had just completed her first Council budget cycle. She said it was very different from budget cycles she had experienced as a member of the Anne Arundel County School Board. She said that she had received significant feedback on the impact fee bill from constituents, which prompted her to support the bill. Both Tricia and Bea Poulin, who represented County Executive Leopold, sang praises of Leopold's tight-fisted fiscal policy.

State Senator Ed Reilly's biggest concern during the legislative session was the state's budget. He said state spending is at an artificially propped up level because there will be no more stimulus funding for 2011. His solution is to focus on the core business of government.

DACA had written to him to seek his support for the stormwater bill, having anticipated that the stormwater management regulations would not be passed. Mr. Reilly reported that the bill never came to the legislature because the regulations were approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

Guest speaker Malcolm Wolff, Director of the Maryland Energy Administration and a resident of Davidsonville, suggested four ways to save money on energy bills:

- Customer choice – shop around for different energy providers.
- Go green and go renewable – for solar energy installation there are \$10,000 rebates plus county incentives not funded by tax dollars, as well as incentives for geothermal installations.
- For citizen and community market power, unite groups who are interested in retrofits, and get a discount.
- He provided brochures listing 15 things to do in your home to be more energy efficient, including energy audits and energy retrofits.

In response to Will's question about window replacement, Mr. Wolff said he has found alternative methods that are more cost effective energy savings.

Miles Hill of BGE explained the Peak Rewards program to reduce homeowners' energy costs.

Will said DACA contributed to three big victories: denial of the cell tower, passage of the impact fees, and success of the Green Expo.

Some members expressed concern that beavers are causing Governor Bridge Road to flood and wondered if anything can be done about it. (*See "Annual Meeting" on page 5 and the South River Federation's assessment of Flat Creek on page 12*).

Martin Zehner spoke on his philosophy of life, economics, and the evils of materialism and how immediate gratification is ruining America. His speech dovetailed nicely with Big Ed's dire warning about the budget.

It was a nice meeting. Martin actually said it was one of our best.

(More on page 5)

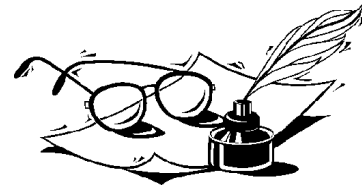
Will Biddle and Kate Fox

DACA members and their contributions

Welcome new members Eric Marzewski, Gary and Barbara Mitchelson, and Bob and Marsha Perry, and returning member Gerald Ferte, and thanks for their contributions to DACA in addition to their membership dues.

Thanks to Donny and Joelle Brooke, John and Linda Bruins, Susan and Greg Hamilton, Joe Jackson, Nick Kemp and Kay Osburnsen, David and Judy Kienast, Bobbie King, Debbie and Ron Oakes, George Picot and Jean Rock, and Alton Sadler for their contributions in addition to renewing their memberships in DACA; and to Kathryn Sprouse for her gift in addition to her dues and renewing her ad for Notes on Ivory. Please patronize our advertisers!

Congratulations and thanks to Amy Richardson for her generous, time-giving service to Davidsonville. She will be president of the Parent-Teacher Organization of Davidsonville Elementary School this fall, as well as treasurer of the South County Pre-Kindergarten Co-op nursery school, and President of the Foxhall community association. Way to go!



... and they write

Send me the e-newsletter! I think it's great. Can't wait to get it - so hurry! The Villager is informative and a wonderful means of supporting our community and citizens and their interests - especially protecting them. E.M.

Looking forward to each Villager newsletter as it is always interesting and keeps me in touch with so many news articles of beautiful Davidsonville!! God Bless. Sincerely, K. A.

... newsletter is great! Checked out old newsletters on line. The sign effort sounds great." E.M.

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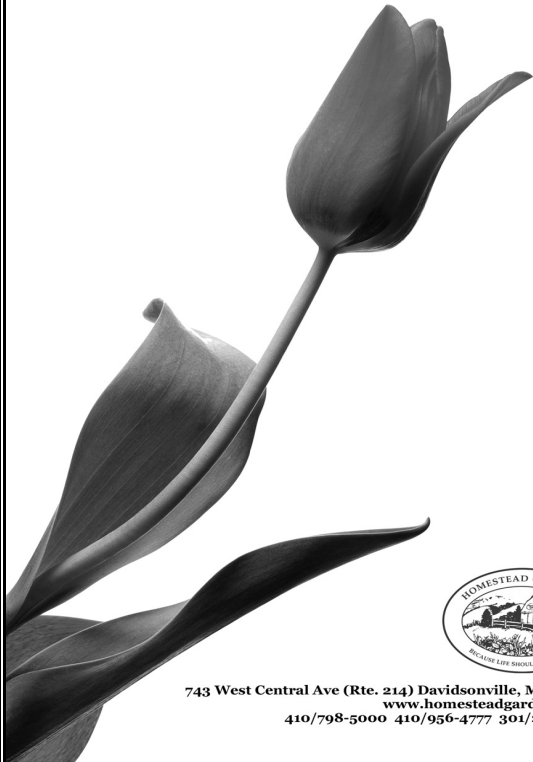

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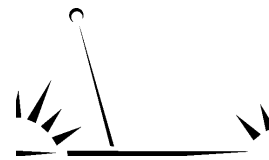
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Developments at Governors Bridge and Patuxent River Roads

The engineering firm of Anarex, Inc. invited nearby residents to a community information meeting to notify them of a new construction project on land owned by members of the Lerch family, which extends from Governors Bridge Road to Route #50. The parcel contains about 20 acres to be subdivided to three residential lots fronting on Patuxent River Road. The remainder is to be left as open green space, with thick tree cover as a buffer between the houses and the highway.

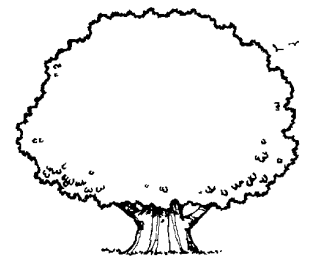
The land is properly zoned; no special exception is required. It will probably take a year or more to go through the process and build the new homes. They may be compatible with the existing homes across the road.

The oddity of the property is the boundary line of a long-gone church still marked on the County's tax map. Named Shipley Chapel, it was built in the late 19th or early 20th Century, when many small Methodist churches were spreading throughout the area. As congregations united to form larger, more central churches, this building was abandoned. Before the Lerch family acquired the farm surrounding it, it had been converted for use as a tobacco barn, and the current owner knew that it had burned down in 1938. Its past existence is not a mystery, but it is curious that the tax map has not been corrected. It even shows the no longer visible access road to the chapel.



No Cell Tower!

After the hearing on June 8 and 9, Administrative Hearing Officer Douglas Hollman denied T-Mobile's application for a special exception to construct a communications tower on the southeast corner of Governors Bridge and Patuxent River Road. Although T-Mobile planned to appeal the denial, the company withdrew its appeal and is seeking other potential locations to increase its coverage for cell phone use. The citizens of "No Tower Zone" are grateful for the support of the community and they are no longer seeking funds at present to finance a legal battle.






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More reports from DACA meetings, roads and such . . .

Vice President Ed Woods, reported on transportation and safety issues. Construction at Birdsville Road and Route 2 is wrapping up; the widening and turn lanes at that intersection should help ease the commute on Route 2.

Rutland Road near Route 450 is open again with a temporary repair where uncontrolled stormwater has undercut the roadway at the headwaters of the South River. Culverts were placed under the roadway as a stopgap until a bridge can be built to allow the water to flow freely; the County Department of Public Works is awaiting approval from MDE to assess the environmental effects of further construction. The problem is caused by beavers damming up the culverts, and the dams can't be removed from them. *(See page 10 for the beaver report on Flat Creek).*

Robert Carobrese reported slow progress on installing a "Welcome to Davidsonville" sign at the intersection of Rutland Road and Davidsonville Road as we await approval from the state level. He also reported that he has submitted a plan to the County Department of Parks and Recreation for a canoe/kayak launching dock on the Patuxent River at Davidsonville Park.

In response to a DACA member's question, Bea Poulin reported that the County now has 600 acres in the South River Greenway, a habitat meant to protect a

migratory bird area, and that acreage is added to the Greenway all the time. She also mentioned that the Scenic Rivers Land Trust holds a walk through it twice a year. Go to the web page www.AACounty.org and follow the links through Recreation and Parks for more information on this and everything else in the County.

DACA's web site is up to date with past issues of the *Villager* posted. Go to www.daca-md.org to see our very attractive pages, thanks to Kate Fox and our web master, Melissa Stanton. Please be aware that the *Villager* welcomes your written and signed articles and community notices. You can send them to the editor, gailenright1@verizon.net, or mail them to DACA, PO Box 222, Davidsonville, MD 21035.

At the July meeting, Ed informed DACA's Executive Committee that the Weather Service's Drought Monitor classified Anne Arundel and ten other counties as Category Two, on a scale of one to five, approaching potential brush fire conditions. Martin Zehner said that if we don't get rain soon, many farmers are at risk of losing their entire crops. As this is being keyed in to the computer, we are enjoying serious rainfall, and hoping it will soak into the ground.

The Executive Committee will not meet in August. The next meeting is September 2, 8:00 pm at the Davidsonville Family Recreation Center.

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A Council In Action

by Cathleen M. Vitale, Councilwoman, District 5, June 30

The other night a violent storm raged through our County with force and fever. Newscasters advise us that we are likely to see similar weather throughout the summer months. The storm came with heavy rains and strong winds. The power and intensity of the storm was quite impressive. As the County and BG&E began the clean-up, I found myself thinking about the strength of the winds that came through.

Have you ever wondered how strong the wind really is or what it is capable of doing? The County Council is learning about wind power. Over the last several years, the Council has considered various types of renewable and sustainable energy, zoning changes where required, tax credits and property set backs. Now we are asked to look into wind power as an energy usage in Anne Arundel County. Councilmen Ron Dillon, Jamie Benoit and Daryl Jones have introduced Bill 39-10, Small Wind Energy Systems. Wind energy systems are more commonly known as windmills. We have seen them grow more popular in the mid-west and overseas. The most common examples are wind farms used in the mid-west. We've all seen pictures of these farms. However, that's not what is being proposed in Anne Arundel County.

The proposal will allow "personal use" wind systems in districts zoned R1, R2, and R5. It will also allow them in all commercial and industrial districts in Anne Arundel County. The first public hearing was on June 21st in the Council chambers. As with most new zoning uses in our County, there were many people who testified both for and against this new proposal for renewable energy. Concerns about noise, aesthetics and possible safety issues were the major points brought up by those that opposed the new legislation. Those who were supportive spoke of environmental benefits, the ability to reduce or eliminate electric bills and their wish to use their own property in a way they believe they should be entitled. Under the regulations as currently proposed, depending on the zoning district, a person will apply for a special exception or a conditional use in order to have a wind system. These systems will not be approved for all sites, as there are certain lot size and setback provisions to protect adjoining lots in case a system falls over. For example, if the system is going to be designed on a pole or a tower (similar to a cell tower), it must be set away from the property line 1.1 times the height of the system. A 120-foot pole (measured from the top of one of the *(next page please)*

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Council member Vitale on wind power

blades as it is vertical in the air) must be at least 150 feet from any property line. This means that in several areas of the County, these systems will be prohibited because lot widths are too small. The turbines will be required to comply with State noise regulations. Property owners will be able to “sell back” the energy that the units create to the power companies as a way to recoup the cost of installation. As many of you know, there are already state and federal tax and property credits available to property owners who install these systems. No commercial sale of the units will be permitted.

Additional hearings were scheduled for July 6, 2010, and I urge you to review the legislation and contact the Council with your comments. There are many nuances to this legislation, too many for this column, and careful scrutiny is required. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the bill sponsors at 410-222-1401. Additionally, as always, if you have any questions concerning legislation or issues in our County, you may reach me at my home at 410-544-4937 or through email cvitale@aacounty.org.




DACA wants you!

With Jerry Walker’s departure at the end of his term on the Executive Committee, DACA has a vacancy on the board and eagerly seeks a volunteer to help us serve your community. Members serve a three-year term and are eligible to continue. They bring to DACA their own interests for the good of the community and choose the activities they wish to advance with the support of the association, whether it is zoning, environmental issues, traffic and safety, or whatever.

The Executive Committee meets at 8:00 pm on the first Thursday of the month in the conference room of Ford Hall at the DFRC. If you are willing to serve your neighbors in this way, please contact any committee member. Phone numbers and email addresses are on the back page.

The Executive Committee will not meet in August. The next meeting is September 2, 8:00 pm at the Davidsonville Family Recreation Center.

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DACA speaks

By email to Council Member Tricia Johnson
From Will Biddle, President, DACA
July 7, 2010

Dear Tricia,

As President of the Davidsonville Area Civic Association I urge you to support the Stormwater Work Group's proposed regulations, especially the 100-foot buffer around streams. This proposal represents a compromise among the various factions of the Work Group.

It is our association's belief that good representation is effectively a compromise of opposing factors. We are fortunate in Anne Arundel County that our County Council is not polarized and rendered ineffective by partisan politics. Unfortunately, as with the

issue of impact fees, after a compromise was attained, one side wishes or wished to broker a better deal by reopening the issue with County Council.

DACA thanks you for reversing your stand on the impact fees when you became fully aware of the history of the issue. Please continue to represent us by supporting the proposed stormwater regulations in their entirety.

If we don't clean up the tributaries to the bay, we will lose the jewel which attracted and continues to attract so many people to live in this county. Developers who are in the business for the long term surely recognize this. Developers interested only in making a quick profit should not be rewarded at the citizens' expense.

Will Biddle



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All Hallows' Chapel, Davidsonville, *pictured on page 4*

In the 17th Century the center of All Hallows' Parish was the South River/West River peninsula, close to the busy international port of London Towne, which serviced the tobacco farms on the rivers, transporting hogsheads of the cured leaf to trade with England. Tobacco was the primary cash crop on which the regional economy was based. Not only was it labor-intensive, but also extracted nutrients from the soil which, if not replenished with fertilizer, left the soil depleted. Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it did not take long to exhaust the land; the farmers simply abandoned their fields and migrated west, inland, toward the Patuxent River.

As the population of the Parish moved west, it became increasingly difficult for a significant proportion of them to walk, ride horseback, or even drive a wagon to London Towne or to the "new" 1730 location on Solomons Island Road in Birdsville, to get to church on a Sunday morning. By the 1840s, the population center of the Parish had reached Davidsonville.

It took 150 years to get the long-wished for chapel in the "upper part of the Parish." In the late 1850s, the Diocese finally approved construction of a "chapel of ease."
(Next page, please)

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All Hallows' Chapel history *(from previous page)*

Built in the Gothic Revival style of its time, the building was in use for meetings in 1860, but was not consecrated until 1865 because of the Civil War and financial depression in the area. The balcony built for free black Episcopalians is now used for the organ and choir loft.

From its outstanding design, architect historian James T. Wollon described this chapel as "one of Maryland's outstanding examples of the Ecclesiologists' Gothic Revival churches," characterized by a separately structured chancel in the east end, a high, wide nave, steep roof, bell cote at the west end, and entry porch on the south side, with buttresses and tall, narrow windows to emphasize the vertical appearance.

The tone of the bell in the Chapel steeple is soft, muted with time. This bell is dated 1797, far older than the Chapel itself. It came from the Annapolis City Hall which was built about 1820 with a tower for "the city bell" on Main Street. In 1864 that bell was rung to alert the citizens of Annapolis to defend the town against Confederate General Jubal Early, who never got there. City Hall was relocated to Duke of Gloucester Street and the bell was removed in 1870. Mr. William T. Iglehart whose family was prominent in Annapolis as well as in Davidsonville, made the gift of the bell to the parish in 1871, and was duly thanked by the Vestry. The Vestry Minutes of 1846-1899, for 3 August, 1871, read "Resolved to thank Mr. William T. Iglehart of Annapolis 'for his presentation to All Hallows Parish Chapel at Davidsonville of the Bell formerly belonging to the City of Annapolis and used for so many years on the City Hall.' T. S. Iglehart to place the bell 'in proper position in the chapel and report the expense to the Vestry.'"

In memory of the Reverend James Bonnar (Rector, 1873-1880), his son, the Rev. David Bonnar (Rector 1880-1886) made the gift of a brass lectern which stood in the Chapel until 2001. Both James and David are buried in the cemetery behind the Chapel.

In 2001, parishioner George D'Andrea built a new pulpit and placed it in the Chapel in time for Easter week services.

The Chapel has been well maintained and worship services are held there each week. *Gail Enright*



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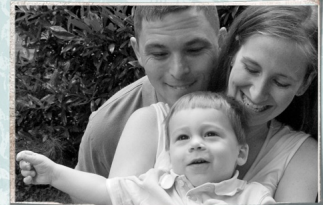
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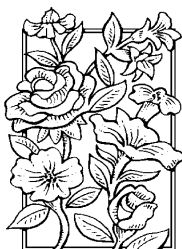


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Davidsonville Dance Club announces new class schedule

The purpose of the Davidsonville Dance Club is to provide regularly scheduled dances and classes for learning, enjoying, and promoting social ballroom dancing for its members on a year-round basis. The club hosts dance parties every Saturday of every month, for the very affordable cost of \$6 for members and \$8 for non-members. Annual Dues are \$10.00.

Dance Class Schedule

Each eight (or ten)-week class session costs \$50 for both lessons plus the yearly \$10.00 dues if you're not already a member.

Tuesday Classes, Chip Atwood, Instructor

Variations and routines for experienced dancers (couples) looking for variety. For information call Brenda LoPrete at 301 262-0347.

Starting July 20, 2010 - eight weeks

6:30 pm - Intermediate Argentine Tango

7:45 pm - Intermediate Quickstep

Wednesday Classes, David Malek, Instructor

For singles and couples. For information call Herbert

Nelson at 301-805-0771 or Patsy Wills at 410-867-1779.

Starting August 11, 2010 - eight weeks

7:00 pm - Basic Merengue

8:00 pm - Intermediate Cha Cha

Starting October 13, 2010 - eight weeks

7:00 pm - Basic Night Club Two-Step

8:00 pm - Intermediate Merengue

Starting in November tbd, Samba; Night Club Two-Step

Starting January 2011, Waltz and Samba

Thursday Classes, Mike Sims, Instructor

Steps and Routines for beginners and novice dancers, singles and couples. For information call Herbert Nelson at 301-805-0771. Starting July 8, 2010 - eight weeks

7:00 pm - Basic West Coast Swing

8:00 pm - Intermediate Salsa

Friday Classes, Instructor - Mary Botta, (LISTD)

International steps and routines for beginners and novice dancers, singles and couples. For information call D. Hensel, 410-257-0631, doloreshensel@verizon.net or Herbert Nelson, 301-805-0771.



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Flat Creek Assessment, by Erik Michelsen

Date Assessed: July 24, 2009; Tide Conditions: High to mid

In response to a question from a DACA member at the Annual Meeting, Will Biddle found on the Internet this report from the South River Federation. It is an assessment of beaver activity taken one year ago on Flat Creek. This small body of water first appears as a marshy area south of Governors Bridge Road near the intersection with St. George Barber Road, and gains volume as it flows northward, entering the South River between Harbor Hills and Glen Isle. The pictures on the web site are beautiful; I had to enlarge the aerial map to see road names. Go to www.southernriverfederation.net to see the report in full, with its many lovely photographs. Gail

At the request of Rhody Holthaus of Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works, I investigated the tidal boundary of Flat Creek to try to determine whether or not beaver activity is occurring in the system.

For the past several months, the barrel culverts under Governors Bridge Road have been largely filled with backwater from downstream, perhaps one to two feet higher than normal baseflow, (next page, please)




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Beavers on Flat Creek *(from previous page)*
 indicating a downstream blockage of some sort.

The interior wetland downstream of the culverts is very difficult to get to, and both Federation and Department of Public Works staff had tried, only to abandon the effort. Early in July, however, I spotted evidence of past beaver activity in the downstream area, including a tree that had been girdled and small branches which had clearly been chewed by beaver.

Using a kayak, I was able to enter the system from the tidewater on a fairly high tide approximately 1,000 feet into the tidal marsh. At that point, I encountered an area, elevated perhaps six inches above the tidal water surface, and overgrown largely with phragmites. It had

the telltale signs of a beaver impoundment that had been present for some time, with only a narrow passage available to low flows and any movement in and out of the system.

Once through the breach, the system opened up again, and the unmistakable signs of recent beaver activity were present. [I got] pictures of bundles of twigs that clearly had been cut by beaver, additional dams each about six inches high, stacked up throughout the system. I found at least three stages, and the beaver, him- or herself. I didn't get a great look at the beaver, but it looked like it may be a juvenile, which wouldn't be a surprise given the fact that there has been activity both higher up in the Flat Creek *(Next page, please)*

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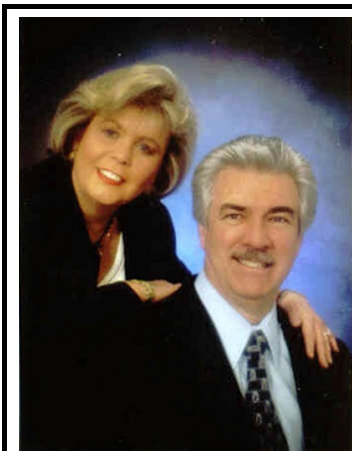
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Beavers on Flat Creek *(from previous page)*
 system – more than a half mile above Governor Bridge Road – and on several other creeks this year. Generally speaking, each impounded area is the territory of a mated pair, and any offspring are cast off to make their homes upstream, downstream, or in another tributary system.

I spoke with Maryland Department of Natural Resources staff and with Mr. Ron Bowen, Director of the County Department of Public Works about the water quality benefits of beaver, particularly in these near tidal systems, where their impoundments can play a critical role in trapping sediments and nutrients and provide critical habitat for fish spawning and amphibians. The DNR wildlife staff I spoke with have been in agreement and they seek to dissuade private property owners from trapping and removing the beavers when they call with “nuisance” complaints.

My recommendation is that the beaver impoundments be left as they are, and that the beavers be left alone. In fact, even as beavers are causing the backwater south of Governor Bridge Road, their likely movement north of the road will actually prove an important flood attenuation feature. Given the road’s elevation and the approximately 550 foot width of the flood plain above Governors Bridge Road, the roadbed acts as grade con-

trol under high flow conditions and impounds several acres of water in that wetland system. Additionally, even if the beaver were to be trapped and removed by DPW, more would almost certainly be back within a few years. The area above Governors Bridge Road is prime habitat, very easily manipulated by the beaver, and other beaver pairs are active *(next page please)*

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Beaver activity on Flat Creek

on the river. Their presence is something we need to get used to and I think those who are concerned about water quality would do well to accept it.

Coincidentally, in June [2009] the Federation sent a mailing to all the residents in the Flat Creek watershed extolling the benefits of beavers to downstream water quality. We are happy to stay involved and to assist DPW in any way possible to build support for leaving the beaver in place.

In the longer term, Governors Bridge Road and several others like it (e.g., Rutland Road at Defense Highway, much of Defense Highway itself, Central Avenue at the top of Beard's Creek) are likely to be threatened in the future by a combination of downstream beaver activity and sea level rise. Working in conjunction with the State Highway Administration, Anne Arundel County DPW should devise a long term strategy either to elevate, or abandon these roadways where they cross within only a few feet of the floodplain.

Improving tidal water quality will likely require either the deliberate flooding of these low-lying areas or accepting the return of beavers into these prime habitats.

Clearly, these steps will require significant sums of money from both the State and County, and something of a culture change to recognize the impact that our infrastructure development patterns (many of which were initiated hundreds of years ago) have had on the health of our natural resources.

The South River Federation is willing to assist in grant seeking and outreach and education efforts and looks forward to working collaboratively with Anne Arundel County DPW on these issues in the future. *Erik Michaelson*



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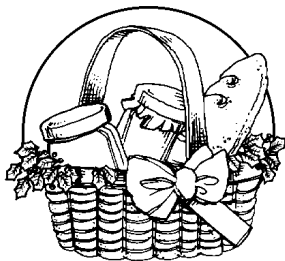
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