



The Villager

Newsletter of the Davidsonville Area Civic Association

Vol. 42, No. 2

P. O. Box 222, Davidsonville, Maryland 21035

July-August 2015

Roads and road construction the main attraction at DACA's Annual Meeting

A good representation of the members attended DACA's 42nd Annual Meeting to hear SHA District Engineer Lee Starkloff talk about current road construction in the Davidsonville Area.

The main road issues in question were a new salt barn to serve this area of the county; the hope of crosswalks at the corner of #214 and #424; the hope for sound barriers to shield residences from traffic noise of Route #50; progress on the expansion of the park-and-ride lot on #424 at route #50. See page 3 for more complete information.

At Chris Asher's request, Will Biddle conducted the election of officers for the coming year. All the incumbents had agreed to continue for another one-year term and they were elected by acclaim as no further nominations were made from the floor. The community will be served by President Christopher Asher; Vice President Ed Woods; Treasurer Robert A. Carobrese; and Secretary Gail Enright. The volunteers for the Board of Directors term to June 2018 were welcomed by acclaim: Phil Livingstone, Ron Oakes, Amy Richardson, and Melissa Stanton. Alison James will fill the term to June 2017. The board has one more vacant slot available to June 2017 and will welcome a volunteer. Many thanks to your neighbors who will serve you and your community in this way.

The members approved a change in DACA's Bylaws to rename the Executive Committee to the

Board of Directors. Henceforth, "executive committee" will refer to the four officers and any other designated individuals so assigned.

Senator Ed Reilly reported on the 2015 legislative session and bills passed. Kate Fox, DACA's representative to the Growth Action Network, updated us on the significance of comprehensive rezoning and local rezoning classifications. Martin Zehner praised the county for its support of the Anne Arundel County Farmers Market. Ed Woods reiterated concerns about the reclosing of the Governors Bridge. He warned local residents that any fund-raising phone calls you may get are not from the fire departments in Crofton and Riva that serve Davidsonville.

On behalf of the *Villager*, Gail thanked the good folks who helped her recover from her disastrous computer crash in March: Kate Fox for restoring her Adobe writer program; and Will Biddle for getting WordPerfect back on line. I have learned a lot about Word, some of it useful, but I am most comfortable using WordPerfect for making the *Villager* my way. Thanks to Mike Greason for fixing my printer/scanner/copier, the source of all the problems. Never forget the great service we get from Minute Man Press of Crofton by DACA member Barbara Morsberger and her son Andy, who does all the *Villager* work. All DACA owes Melissa Stanton thanks for her extraordinary work on the web page.

The treasurer's annual report can be found on page 12.

Gail Enright

This space for US Postal Service address

DACA members and news

Welcome new members Alison James, Mark and Betsy Scible, and Bruce Stein, and thanks for their contributions to DACA in addition to their dues.

Thanks also to Mildred Anderson, John and Linda Bruins, Ray King, Alton Sadler, and others for renewing their membership in DACA and for their contributions to DACA in addition to their dues.

Special thanks to John and Jeanne Beschenbossel, LIFE members, for their generous gift to DACA.

Mrs. Hofstetter, Principal of DES, wrote about Green Expo: I thought it was a picture perfect day and I do hope Davidsonville can host it again next year! Thanks. *Jean Marie*

IN MEMORIAM

Howard C. Fleck
June 14, 1934~July 2, 2015
DACA member since 1993

IN MEMORIAM

Calvin G. Friedrich
November 9, 1924~July 6, 2015
DACA member since 1986

Tracie Hovermale, TWIN honoree

Congratulations to Tracie Hovermale, nominated by her company, Trace International, in Annapolis, to be recognized for her community service. Tracie served on DACA's Executive Committee from 2012 to 2014 and was co-chairman of DACA's Green Expo in 2014 and 2015.

The TWIN program is conducted by the YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County; the corporate sponsor this year was Severn Savings Bank. The YWCA has recognized and honored women who make significant contributions to their corporations and to the community with its Tribute to Women in Industry—TWIN—for almost 30 years. The award also recognizes corporations whose policies and practices encourage the professional advancement of women.

The awards dinner was held June 4th at the Westin Annapolis. The Annapolis Capital published an announcement of the 2015 Class of TWIN honorees and thanked all the business sponsors.

IN MEMORIAM

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Senator Ed Reilly at DACA’s Annual Meeting

As a result of state redistricting, Senator Reilly’s District 33 now includes western Anne Arundel County, from the Calvert County line and the Patuxent River north to Route #450, across the head of the South River to the Severn, excluding Annapolis, and represents 131,000 citizens, having lost some communities and gained others. Davidsonville is still in his district.

Senator Reilly enumerated the highlights of the 2015 Legislative Session.

The primary election date was changed so as not to conflict with a religious holiday.

The 2016-17 budget is fiscally responsible, with the smallest increase in spending in the past 40 years.

On drugs, Use and Possession of Marijuana and Drug Paraphernalia in a public place was changed from a criminal offense to a civil offense punishable by a fine up to \$500. It passed in the House and the Senate.

Watershed Protection SB 863 adjusts the requirement for the ten most populated jurisdictions (Baltimore City and nine counties) to collect a stormwater remediation fee and allows them more flexibility in levying the fee. The Anne Arundel County Council voted four to three to retain the current fee structure.

On education: With SB 455, the Governor and the Comptroller sought to delay the beginning of the school

year until after Labor Day, but the bill failed in both House and Senate Committees.

SB 497, co-sponsored by Senator Reilly and passed by House and Senate; establishes a Commission to Review Maryland’s Use of Assessments and Testing in Public Schools. The commission must report to the State Board of Education by July 1, 2016 and the Board must report to the Governor by October 1, 2016.

SB 595 co-sponsored by Senator Reilly, passed House and Senate, Public Charter School Improvement Act, increases the lottery pool and gives additional consideration to admitting siblings of current students.

Senator Reilly supports hydraulic fracturing, but he voted for the two-year moratorium to delay fracking for natural gas, passed by the Senate. It is intended to allow for additional study and development of regulations to be in place by October 1, 2016.

A second bill on fracking— Hydraulic Fracturing Liability—permits chemical measurements used in fracking to be allowed as evidence in fracking lawsuits; and it increases the amount of comprehensive general and environment pollution liability insurance coverage that a fracking company must maintain.



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State Highway Administration seeks additional salt storage in Davidsonville

Lee Starkloff, Engineer for SHA District 5 (includes Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s counties) accepted DACA’s invitation to inform residents about proposed construction plans in the Davidsonville area.

Mr. Starkloff first addressed the issue of a proposed salt storage facility, a major concern to local residents. He told them the county needs an additional storage site to prevent a potential shortage of salt, as has occurred in previous years (although not this past winter of 2014-15) when SHA was forced to borrow salt from other jurisdictions. Shortages can occur in a year of heavy snow or when the port of Baltimore is closed, or when cargo ships do not deliver. Among the criteria for a location is accessibility from a major highway; the state is considering several potential locations to build a salt “barn.” Currently, the most likely proposed site is 3.9 acres on the northwest corner of Route 50 and Rossback Road at Route 424, on the opposite side of Davidsonville Road from the enlarged Park & Ride lot. The advantage of this site is that the state already owns the land.

In 1951, William Doepkens, owner of Middle Plantation on Davidsonville Road, took a chance to help

a young aspiring farmer and sold him about 29 acres beside the new Route 50. Jack Scible took on a mortgage and began farming his land, which he named Y Worry Farm. In 1960, the state bought all four corners of the crossing at #50 and #424 to build a full cloverleaf interchange. Mr. Scible resisted selling his land, but the state forced him to sell 3.9 acres for \$2,800 and promised in a letter of agreement that he could continue to farm the land until the state needed to use it; when needed, it was to be used only for construction of a road interchange. After 1960, two cloverleaves were built but additional funding for the third and fourth cloverleaves was not forthcoming. The Park and Ride lot was built on the third corner.

Now SHA wants to build a salt barn, of a size that could hold 8,000 to 10,000 tons, larger than a salt dome, which usually contains 2,000-3,000 tons. Similar structures can measure 120-150 by 80 feet, 25-30 feet high. This facility will take up two to three acres. Calling it a “barn” will not make it an agricultural fit.

Mark Scible farms his father’s land now, along with land in several nearby locations. The nearest neighbors who also will be impacted by the *(next page, please)*



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Salt barn *(from previous page)*

construction are Mildred Anderson and Bill Doepkens, owners of the acreage on both sides of Davidsonville Road that was the historic Middle Plantation. They and several others object to it as a source of heavy salt truck traffic, noise, and air pollution; the potential run-off of salty stormwater; an inappropriately over-sized building in a rural area. Several DACA members expressed concern about the traffic safety of the Rossback Road /Route 424/Route 50 intersection.

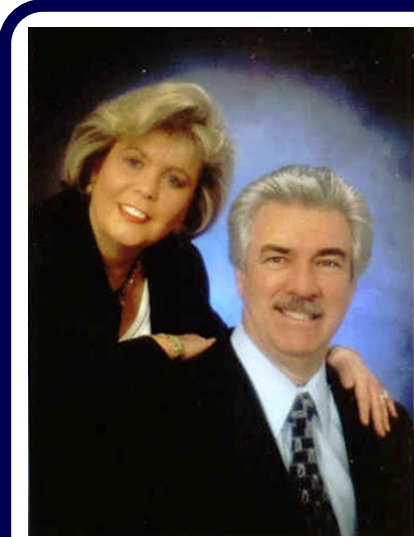
Brenda Jackson and Jeff Bishop also spoke in opposition. Jeff noted that nearly every salt facility he has seen also has a cell tower on it; he asked if a new barn would also have one. Cell tower rental would be income to the state.

Mark Scible contacted District Seven **County Council member Jerry Walker**, who wrote to SHA in opposition to locating it at that site: "The SHA intended to erect a salt dome on this property back in the 1990s, at which time Delegate Marsha Perry led opposition from the community. Historical documentation provided by [. . .] Mark and Betsy Scible shows that the original

intent for use of the land was an interchange at Routes 50 and 424. This particular site is the entrance to Crofton. It is environmentally sensitive and rural in nature, something that is very important to the citizens of my District. If salt storage is necessary along this undeveloped section of highway, I suggest you locate it on the other side of Route 50 near the Davidsonville Park & Ride, behind the recently expanded parking lot. At that location, the topography is on a lower grade and therefore the dome would be less of an eyesore."

Other alternate suggestions were a site on the north side of Route 50 at Route 301; farther north on Maryland Route 3 in Severn, and on I-97 at Najoles Road (just north of Benfield Boulevard west of Route I-97).

During the discussion, **Senator Reilly** engaged in a dialog with Mr. Starkloff. He seemed not entirely unsympathetic to the opponents, but he opined that the letter of agreement permitted "construction" by the state, not limited to road construction. [The letter actually says "road construction" in one sentence and "construction" in another.] *(Turn to page 6, please)*



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Salt barn (from page 5)

Senator Reilly recognized that the state is not exempt from environmental restrictions and must abide by such regulations.

He noted that the Scibles have farmed the land all these years with no fee paid to the state for using it. However, farming requires a great deal of care for the land to preserve it and prevent it from growing up in weeds, vines, and trash vegetation if left untouched. Farming is much more than just throwing out some seed and reaping the benefits. The Scibles have conscientiously tended the land they used.

In reply to Senator Reilly's questions, Mr. Starkloff said that the barn facility was to be used only for salt storage, not vehicle maintenance. The state already owns 28 salt domes with vehicle maintenance facilities that are duly inspected by the state Department of Natural Resources every month. Once it is approved, construction should be complete in less than a year from approval, with actual work taking three to four months. It is not yet funded.

Mr. Starkloff took away full knowledge that DACA and Davidsonville residents oppose the salt dome here.


On June 9, Bill Doepkens wrote to Mr. Starkloff:

I am a third generation farmer who resides in Davidsonville and I make my living farming Doepkens Farm, which lies adjacent to the northeast quadrant of the Route 50/424 interchange. Doepkens Farm was once part of a large plantation known as Mareen Duvall's Middle Plantation, the second land grant of Anne Arundel County. The interchange lies in the center of this historic plantation. This land was in the Duvall family for approximately 100 years, then in the Hodges family for approximately the same and now in my family for almost 100 years. So one can deduce that this land, as well as my cousin's land (Mark Scible of Y Worry Farm, also a part of Middle Plantation) has a long history of being farmed and has survived as one of the last bastions of working farms in Davidsonville along Route 424. Today people come from all across the county and the larger metro area and state to purchase products directly from our farm shops and to enjoy the last remaining picturesque farms and rural open spaces left in Davidsonville.

Now I learn that the State Highway Administration (SHA) is considering building a mega salt facility that will destroy the *(next page, please)*

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Doepkens letter

(From previous page)

rural character which citizens of Davidsonville and Crofton have come to know and value as part of the community in which they live. Please consider the following reasons against such construction.

- A major concern is the disruption to the community by truck traffic, burdening an already very dangerous intersection in which rarely a week goes by without an accident, some of which even need Medevac choppers.
- Noise is another concern with such a facility. The loud diesel engines, the booming of dump truck tailgates and bulldozer roar will additionally ruin the bucolic nature of this historic rural setting.
- At a time when the state of Maryland, Anne Arundel County, and other organizations are working to save farms and open space it is beyond my comprehension why SHA is even considering such a project at this site. It will destroy established woodland and open space. This makes it even harder for Davidsonville farmers to exist and thrive.
- I am also concerned about the environmental impact a salt structure has on agricultural land. What studies have been done? What's the long term effect? What are the health risks? What's the olfactory level? How much light pollution will there be? How will it affect air quality? How are animals and their habitat being af-

fectured? Are there any endangered species living there? What else will it lead to? More intense industrial use of the property in the future? That is usually the natural progression of sites such as this.

• As state agencies are planting trees and encouraging people to plant trees to save the Bay, it is downright incomprehensible why SHA would destroy the trees in the northwest quadrant of the interchange to build this monstrosity. The entire interchange was planted in the 1960s by my father, William P. Doepkens. He was a man ahead of his time in promoting best soil practices in farming and planting native trees. As an active member of the state Forestry Board, he chose to donate his services in foresting the newly built interchange with 50,000 white pines and thousands of other native trees and plants to beautify what is known today as the Davidsonville interchange. These 50-year-old maturing trees provide wildlife habitat, scenic beauty, and a much needed noise buffer to the area. People tell me they know they are home from work when they see the trees and farms as they exit from Route 50. I doubt they would feel the same way looking at a commercial/industrial construction.

With so many commercial/industrial sites so close to this place, I am perplexed by the idea of imposing such an industrial structure on *(Next page, please)*

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Doepkens letter (from page 7)

land of such history and beauty. I am not sure why the people of this state have to fight the state on issues such as this, especially given the current environmental climate and efforts to Save the Bay.

Having grown up and farmed in Davidsonville all my life and witnessed all the changes from a totally rural agricultural community to what it is today, a residential/farm community, I feel SHA is way off base in proposing a salt facility at this interchange. I fear it will be the next step in eliminating, completely and forever, farms of Davidsonville. This saddens me greatly and makes me wonder why I try so hard to maintain a beautiful working farm in such a hostile environment. I want it on record that I am completely opposed to this proposal and I will work to save my rural heritage that is so rich in natural beauty.

Sincerely yours,
William J. Doepkens

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More road issues

Mr. Starkloff responded to Melissa Stanton's plea for painted **crosswalks at the corner of #424 and #214.**

He said that crosswalks can be installed only where sidewalks already exist and there is pedestrian activity. DACA can ask the county Department of Public Works to install sidewalks [along #214] and, if DPW approves, the state will pay half the cost. He added that Route 214 is due to be resurfaced in FY 2017, implying that a request for sidewalks could reasonably be considered.

In response to Jeff Bishop's question regarding **sound barriers** along Route 50, he stated that installation is tied to the amount of noise measured in decibels inside the affected homes. Where Governors Bridge Road and Patuxent River Road are closest to Route 50, this was last measured in 1996 with a result of .1 while the requirement for barriers is .5 [decibels?]. Can people who are not sound engineers be sure what that means? Dr. John Beschenbossel has a fat file of statistics and documentation from the time he applied for sound barriers in that neighborhood.




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And finally, the Park & Ride lot!

Bob Bradshaw and Ed Woods have been following the progress, or lack thereof, in construction of the Park and Ride lot, for several years. Mr. Starkloff acknowledged that the work is behind schedule. He said paving was to start in July and completion of 100 parking spaces is due this fall. When asked, he replied that the state is allowed to assess penalties of up to \$400 per day for late completion, but they prefer not to use fines when less stringent measures work better. A major concern over the past few years is the illegal parking along 424 by commuters who arrive too late to get a space in the lot. That number over time has shrunk from 30 or more cars almost every day to only six on June 4.

On June 26, Bob Bradshaw telephoned me to announce with great jubilation, that at last, paving began this day! On July 15 he wrote that the new addition may be open by July 16. Hurrah!

Gail Enright, DACA Secretary

Lee Starkloff's follow-up letter

After the annual meeting, Mr. Starkloff addressed residents' concerns in a letter to DACA on June 25.

On **traffic safety**, he wrote:

Safety is of vital importance to State Highway Administration (SHA) and your concerns are greatly appreciated. As part of our safety review, we have reviewed the police reported accidents that have occurred at this intersection within the last three years. We are pleased to report that the review of this data has shown that the accidents at this intersection are not atypical of similar intersections within Anne Arundel County.

We have also completed a review of the signing within the vicinity of this intersection. It is noted that there are already existing intersection warning signs along both approaches of MD 424 to Rossback Road. These signs serve to warn motorists of the upcoming intersection and the potential for vehicles turning to and from Rossback Road.

Condition of Davidsonville Road:

It may interest you that our Traffic section is currently reviewing all of the signing, striping, and pavement markings along MD 424 from MD 214 (West Central Avenue) to MD 450 (Defense Highway). They will be passing along their improvements to our Annapolis Shop in mid July. You should see the improvements in place by mid October.

Sound barrier requests:

Another community member also expressed interest in reviewing the information regarding sound barrier requests. That information can be found by clicking on this link: <http://roads.maryland.gov/Index.aspx?Pageid=322>.

Thank you again for your concern. If you have questions or need information, please contact Ms. Kim Tran, Assistant Traffic District Engineer, at 410-841-1003 or via email at ktran@sha.state.md.us. She will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Lee Starkloff, District Engineer

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When will they open the Governors Bridge?

DACA Vice President Ed Woods has been following the closing of the Governors Bridge for several months, and wrote to the Prince George’s County Department of Public Works officials to ask that it be reopened soon. Having received no reply previously, on July 1 he wrote to PG District 4 Council member Todd Turner, with a copy to AA District 7 Council member Jerry Walker, to ask for an update on the repairs to Governor's Bridge.

“As the Vice President and Public Safety Chair for the Davidsonville Area Civic Association, I am hearing from a lot of unhappy neighbors [about the bridge]. Several folks who have walked down to the bridge say that it appears that nothing is being done since it was closed. The bridge is an important link between Anne Arundel and Prince George’s counties on a normal day, and when Route 50 experiences a problem such as an accident, the Governor's Bridge becomes the “safety valve” to allow residents to cross the Patuxent in a timely manner. We really need to get this problem resolved as quickly as possible.”

A week later he wrote to Councilman Todd’s Administrative Aide, Evelyn Archie, who responded immediately, “Placing a call to them now.” Thanks to Jerry Walker for adding his help.

Then Mr. Turner replied, “Ed and Jerry--

Sorry for the delay in getting back to you on the most recent status of the bridge from our County Public Works & Transportation Department (DPWT). . . . I wanted to update you, including the response below we received yesterday from DPWT.

In addition, as part of the adopted FY 2016 Prince George’s County budget, I was able to set aside some capital funding for the eventual repair/rehab/replacement options for the bridge after review by DPWT and Anne Arundel County (as you may be aware there is a joint

agreement between the Counties) in the next fiscal year. . . .I will continue to work and check back on the issue given the impact on both counties’ residents. Let me know if you need anything else.”

Mr. Turner’s reply sounds like PG DPW is doing nothing until next year.

The *Villager*’s best suggestion is to flood them with emails to Tomeka C. Bumby TCBumby@co.pg.md.us and to Councilman Todd M. Turner TMTurner@co.pg.md.us or letters sent to them at Prince George’s County Administration Building, 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772.

Zoning issues worked on by Growth Action Network

Kate Fox represents DACA as a member of the Growth Action Network. GAN monitors zoning changes in the county with the purpose of trying to guide population growth and commercial zoning use in the parts of the county where the infrastructure can support it.

Kate reviewed the most recent hot spots on GAN’s agenda. *Villager* discussed the Comprehensive Rezoning lawsuit and Stormwater Remediation repeal bills (defeated) in previous issues. Kate updated us on rubble fill applications, no longer allowed under a special exception. However, the Cunningham company’s deadline for special exception, which expired this spring, was extended until December 31, 2015.

With unanimous passage of Council Bill 8-15, craft breweries on farms are now allowed in RA zones as a conditional use, and are permitted in commercial, industrial, and mixed-use districts. Several potential breweries are in the Davidsonville area.

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South County Rotary duck races

The Rotary Club of South Anne Arundel County held its third annual "Quacks for Backpacks" rubber duck races at Camp Letts on Sunday, May 31st, from noon to 3:00. DACA is pleased to have contributed \$200 to support the Bountiful Backpack program run by our local Rotary Club. During the past school year 115 local elementary school students were provided with food in a backpack every week so they wouldn't be hungry over the weekends. These are children who receive free meals and often have no food available when they are not in school. Sadly, hunger remains an issue in South County and the local Rotary Club has committed to run this project to help address the need. Each week Rotary Club members and community volunteers pack 115 meals and then deliver them to the participating elementary schools for the children to pick up at the end of the school week. Food is stored at the Carrie Weedon Science Center in Galesville, and dedicated shoppers regularly keep the shelves stocked. With an estimated annual cost of nearly \$15,000 this is the largest local project currently undertaken by the South County Rotary Club.

Quacks for Backpacks is a fun family event created to help raise funds to keep the program running. Each year around the end of May, hundreds of yellow rubber ducks race one another right off the beach at Camp Letts. Small rubber ducks are "adopted" for \$10 and, after being decorated by kids, they are placed in a bin prior to the race. The top ten finishers receive prizes.

A second race with jumbo rubber ducks occurs as well. It costs \$200 to adopt a jumbo duck and most are creatively decorated. DACA's duck was in this race and competed for the coveted Golden Duck trophy. Davidsonville United Methodist Church's duck, dressed as a pig, won the jumbo duck race by a considerable margin. WNAV's Wiley Baker served as emcee for the event and provided play by play commentary in the water (wearing a wireless microphone). Lawn games, giant bubble making, a professional deejay, face painting, and a magic show provided entertainment for all.

Thanks to Bill Bagdasian for providing food from Adam's Taphouse and Grille. Kona Ice, Kettle Corn, and a variety of vendors were on site as well. Thankfully the weather was perfect and the event was well attended.

Approximately \$10,000 was raised due to the generous support of DACA and many other local businesses and families. Thank you to all those attended and we hope to see you next year!

Chris Asher
Past President
South County Rotary Club

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DACA Treasurer's Annual Report June 5-2014~June 4, 2015

JUNE 2014	BALANCES	JUNE 2015
\$ 672.87	PNC Bank Checking (April bank statement)	\$ 574.60
8,786.18	PNC Bank Savings (June 30, 2015)	8,787.27
<u>3,274.72</u>	T. Rowe Price Prime Reserve Fund	<u>3,274.72</u>
\$ 12,733.77	TOTAL	\$12,636.59
RECEIPTS		
\$ 980.00	Dues	\$ 1,270.00
3,034.00	Advertisements	3,450.00
2,330.00	Contributions	2,265.00
<u>2,287.00</u>	Green Expo	3,350.00
\$ 8,631.00	Overpayment refund from printer	<u>168.80</u>
	TOTAL	\$10,503.80
DISBURSEMENTS		
\$5,154.64	Minuteman Press for <i>Villager</i> *	\$ 5,373.55
864.77	U.S.P.S. postage and office supplies	315.91
1,400.00	Contributions	1,400.00
2,441.42	Green Expo	1,304.69
<u>334.41</u>	Executive Committee dinner	438.20
	Refund for Annapolis Radiator ad cancelled	65.00
	Services	1,000.00
	General Liability insurance	210.00
	Web site	<u>329.32</u>
\$ 10,195.24	TOTAL	\$ 10,436.67

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DACA's ongoing major expenses are always the *Villager* printing and postage, which are combined in one line item payable to Minuteman Press of Crofton, as they print and mail the *Villager* with one invoice to DACA, handling all the US Postal Service documentation and cost of bulk mail postage. Green Expo expenses were less in 2015 than in 2014 as we did not have to pay designer fees or buy new signs. The greatest expenses were the cost of the giveaway tote bags (\$504.60 for 400 bags this year instead of 300) and \$270 for 400 seedling trees we gave away, and \$300 to transport the Tiny House, all of which were approved by the Green Expo Committee and DACA's Executive Committee. Thanks to DACA's board members for recruiting more sponsors in 2015 to cover costs.

Sandra M. Woelfel, CPA
Resident of Davidsonville

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Who Wakes Up Earlier, a Rooster or a Teenager?

By Melissa Stanton

Answer: A teenager, if he or she attends Anne Arundel County Public Schools

With a start time of 7:17 a.m., the 12 public high schools in Anne Arundel County are the earliest starting schools in all of Maryland. For some students, this requires being at the school bus stop as early as 5:30 a.m., which means rising from bed even earlier and, during much of the school year, starting their day more than two hours before sunrise.

My son's bus picks up at 6:30 a.m. on a Mt. Airy Road corner a half-mile from our home. Because every minute matters and my husband and I don't want our child walking Davidsonville's sidewalk-less streets in the misty, pre-dawn dark, one or the other of us wakes earlier than our jobs require in order to drive him to the bus.

On June 18 *The Capital* ran an article that began: "It's official: The Board of Education has committed to start school later beginning in the 2016-17 school year." After two decades during which many parents, educators and health care providers in our area have been advocating for later school start times, such news was both welcome and a relief. However, many of the details, including the most important one—*How much later will school start?*—are still to be determined. What is not in doubt:

THE SITUATION:

Unless parents, students, educators and the community-at-large stay engaged on this issue, Anne Arundel County Public Schools could start high school as little as, say, 15 minutes later and consider their promise fulfilled. Changing school start times is a logistical challenge that public school leadership would rather not have to deal with.

While Anne Arundel County—and our nation as a whole—is concerned about the achievement gap between children of differing races and socioeconomic groups, and between Americans and students abroad, forcing our teenagers to absorb calculus, AP physics or, frankly, any academic subject before or soon after dawn feeds rather than shrinks the gap.

Speaking of feeding, although we're so often told that breakfast is "the most important meal of the day," for many high schoolers, there's neither time nor appetite enough for eating so early and so soon after waking. Unlike an adult who can grab a bite or drink coffee in the car or at work, students are prohibited from doing either on the bus or in the classroom.

THE SCIENCE

From the **American Academy of Pediatrics**: "The evidence strongly implicates earlier school start times (i.e., before 8:30 a.m.) as a key modifiable contributor to insufficient sleep, as well as circadian rhythm disruption ... The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports the efforts of school districts to optimize sleep in students and urges high schools and middle schools to aim for start times that allow students the opportunity to achieve optimal levels of sleep (8.5 to 9.5 hours) and to improve physical health (e.g., reduced obesity risk) and mental health (e.g., lower rates of depression), safety (e.g. drowsy driving crashes), academic performance, and quality of life."

From the **Education Commission of the States**: "Research from the past 20 years has consistently supported these findings ... education start times requiring waking at 7:00 a.m. or earlier—which is like adults (Continued on page 14)

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Start school later (from page 13)

waking at 4:00 a.m. every day—cause chronic sleep loss.... Despite the substantial body of evidence from scientific, medical and education research supporting later school starts, almost all adolescent education in the United States currently has early start times. This leaves states, school districts and other responsible bodies in the untenable position of defending a current practice that has been demonstrated to be detrimental to student learning, health and safety.”

From the **National Education Association**: “[The NEA] believes that overall health and performance are best achieved with adequate rest on a regular basis. The Association supports school schedules that follow research-based recommendations regarding the sleep patterns of age groups. The Association further supports programs within the education framework that promote understanding of the importance of adequate rest.”

In a December 2014 report, the **Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** (DHMH) noted that schools with later start times have reported financial savings, improved academic achievement, higher scores on state and national tests, better mental and overall health, decreased motor vehicle accidents, and higher attendance and graduation rates.

THIS STATUS QUO NEEDS TO GO

Most families, local legislators, educators and members of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education know that our county’s early start times are detrimental to the health and academic success of children. The primary objections to starting school later have been due to the anticipated costs and logistical challenges. In response to those concerns:

County Executive Steve Schuh and the Anne Arundel County Council support starting our public schools later and have provided funding for the specific purpose of purchasing transportation routing software and the services of a specialist to run it. Unlike similarly sized school systems, Anne Arundel County Public Schools determines its school bus routing and stops entirely by hand based on past practice. If AACPS determined its bus routes, stops and schedules based on actual enrollment, location and traffic pattern data, school bus routes could be made more efficient, thus enabling schools to start later in an affordable and effective manner.

Separate from the bus software funds, the county has provided AACPS with funds specifically earmarked to pay for long overdue teacher raises. Since the school system’s superintendent and the Board of Education said starting school later and teacher raises were not feasible within the system’s existing billion-plus dollar budget, this funding represents the allocation of extra monies so both needs can be met.

Some people argue that starting school later is coddling kids, especially teens, who are tired simply because they stay up too late. Besides, the argument continues, when they grow up they’ll need to wake up early for work, so they might as well get used to it now.

However, teenagers who attend public school in Anne Arundel County are already at work much earlier than most adults need to be. While adult work schedules do vary, the traditional workday begins at 9:00 a.m. not 7:17 a.m. (And hopefully people who do have such early work start times are not still working or commuting after 9 p.m., which is often the case for teens who play sports, have part-time jobs, or are involved in extracurricular activities, many of which don’t begin until evening due to the work schedules of the volunteer coaches and club mentors.)

Also, teenagers are *not* adults, and the biological sleep patterns and sleep needs of children — which teens still are — differ from those of adults. In order to get the full stretch of sleep that a teenager requires, an Anne Arundel County student who has to wake at, say 5:30 a.m., will need to be in bed and *asleep* at 8:30 p.m. That is both developmentally and logistically unrealistic.

It’s time for Anne Arundel County Public Schools to start school later, and ideally to do so in order that no child needs to be at a bus stop before 7:00 a.m. or at his or her desk before 8:00 a.m. *(Next page please)*

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Start school later (from page 14)

As is always the case with change, starting school later will be a welcome and overdue relief for some and a concern and irritant for others. But a change that allows students to regularly start their day *after* rather than *before* the sun rises, is a welcome change. As a parent of two middle-schoolers who have seen their older brother struggle with the earliest school start time in the state, I hope this particular Maryland superlative will soon be a thing of the past.

Melissa Stanton is a Davidsonville Area Civic Association board member. Additional information about school start times can be found at startschoollater.net or startschoollater.net/md--anne-arundel-county. The local chapter is on Facebook @StartSchoolLaterAnneArundel.

AACo Farmers Market gift

Many thanks to the Anne Arundel County Farmers Market for its continued support of DACA. Treasurer Helen Perry sent a contribution of \$100 to DACA. Catch Helen's Kitchen on television Fridays at 5:30, Verizon channel 39, or Wednesdays at 11:30 am on Comcast channel 99.

Welcome to Davidsonville

Now that SHA has accomplished all the grading and finishing of the Park & Ride lot, DACA will once again take up the issue of erecting a sign to welcome drivers to our community. The executive committee began working on it on 2009, and decided that the most visible location for it is on #424, Davidsonville Road, south of the interchange of Route 50, planted on the hill between Rutland Road and the Chase farm. The hill was built of dirt owned by SHA and left over from the original Park and Ride lot construction and DACA waited to learn if SHA would take and use the dirt for this expansion of the lot. The lot is done; the hill is untouched; DACA is ready to put up the sign.

Davidsonville Family Recreation Center

The DFRC is located at the former Nike site on the corner of Queen Anne Bridge Road and Wayson Road. When the federal government ended its military use, the county was able to acquire it for a park. The organizations that use the property have a representative on the board to operate the site. Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks, AA Farmers Market, Canine Training Association, South County Pre-K Co-op Nursery, Anne Arundel Radio Club, Boy Scout Troop 454, Coast Guard Auxiliary, DACA, Davidsonville Dance Club, Free State Fly Fishers, National Capital Radio and Television, and Girl Scouts have meeting and storage space there and hold classes and other events on the site. To inquire about membership for your organization, please contact Barbara Freeman at tombarb.freeman@verizon.net.

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The Westfield Mall Farmers Market merged with

AAC Farmers Market in April and added 15 to 20
vendors at the Riva Road site on Saturdays, as well as
selling there on Sundays and on Tuesdays.



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The **Villager**

Newsletter of the Davidsonville Area Civic Association



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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.

J O I N D A C A

MEMBERSHIP: I would like to be a member of DACA and receive the *VILLAGER*. At \$5.00 per year for each person, my check for \$_____ is enclosed, 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?