

The Villager

Newsletter of the Davidsonville Area Civic Association

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P.O. Box 222, Davidsonville, Maryland 21035

January-February 2022

Patuxent River Commission dismisses Patuxent Riverkeeper

The *Bay Journal* reported on December 16 that Governor Hogan has declined to reappoint Patuxent Riverkeeper Fred Tutman to the State's Patuxent River Commission after his 23 years of service on the Commission. *Bay Journal* board member Barbara Sollner-Webb, professor emerita of biological chemistry at the Johns Hopkins University, with an 18-year tenure on the same Commission, was also not reappointed, nor was Al Tucker, a physicist and farmer and president of the Chesapeake Environmental Protection Association (CEPA). All have been replaced. No reason was given for this abrupt action. Considering the volume of work and collaboration that Fred Tutman has done with the State's only river commission (i.e., river report cards, Patuxent Water Trail work, web sites, river summits, tree plantings, trash cleanups, etc.), this is a new chapter and a genuine shift in the role played by the two leading water quality watchdogs on the Patuxent, one private and the other public.



Saturday, March 27, 2022, 10 am-1 pm
Homestead Gardens, Davidsonville

What is the Patuxent River Commission?

The Patuxent River Commission (PRC), a state agency, was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1985 after the 1980 Patuxent River Watershed Act was enacted to protect this important Maryland resource. The PRC includes the seven counties that border the river, the city of Laurel, and additional watershed stakeholders and interest groups. The Patuxent River Policy Plan represents the shared commitment of state agencies and the seven counties—Howard, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Montgomery, Prince George's, Charles, and St. Mary's—and municipalities in the Patuxent River Watershed to protect and enhance this natural resource. It envisions a Patuxent River ecosystem as vital and productive in 2050 as it was in the 1950s.

The PRC comprises 34 members, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the State Senate, who represent each of the seven counties, various government agencies (county soil conservation districts, Calvert Co. Planning & Zoning; Maryland Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Planning, Department of Transportation), Army Corps of Engineers, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, National Capital Park and Planning Commission; Watershed Management, Patuxent Research Refuge, and University of Maryland Extension Service; and various occupations—developers, watermen, farmers, academics, and citizen environmentalists. Members serve staggered four-year terms and are not paid for their work.

The PRC serves as a steward for the Patuxent River and commits to lead and inspire actions to protect, enhance, and restore river species as well as the natural, cultural, economic, and recreational values in the watershed. Its duties include oversight of river cleanup plans and the ability to "review and comment" (Continued on page 4)

Our New Volunteer, Margie Chase

Congratulations to Margie Chase on her retirement after a long career with Nationwide Insurance and please welcome her as an off-board volunteer for DACA. She continues to maintain her long association with the Maryland and the AA County Farm Bureaus. She will keep DACA informed of issues and events in the agricultural community. She attended DACA's January Board meeting and presented a load of information that affects local farmers. See her report on page 3.

Margie and her husband Bobby are life-long farmers who operate Chase's Produce farm stand on Davidsonville Road. They have been members of DACA since 1996.

Meadow creation from Bob Bradshaw

Imagine your own field of floating, flying colors of flowers, butterflies, and bees. Bob Bradshaw is seeking residents who are willing to set aside an area of their yard or a field that they will plant with a specific mix of grass seed. This seed will grow wild flowers where bees and butterflies will flourish while pollinating. Bob is working with Bowen's Farm Supply to acquire the special seed.

If you have some idle space on your property that you would share with the bees and butterflies, please respond to info@daca-md.org. Bob will follow up with you in the spring.

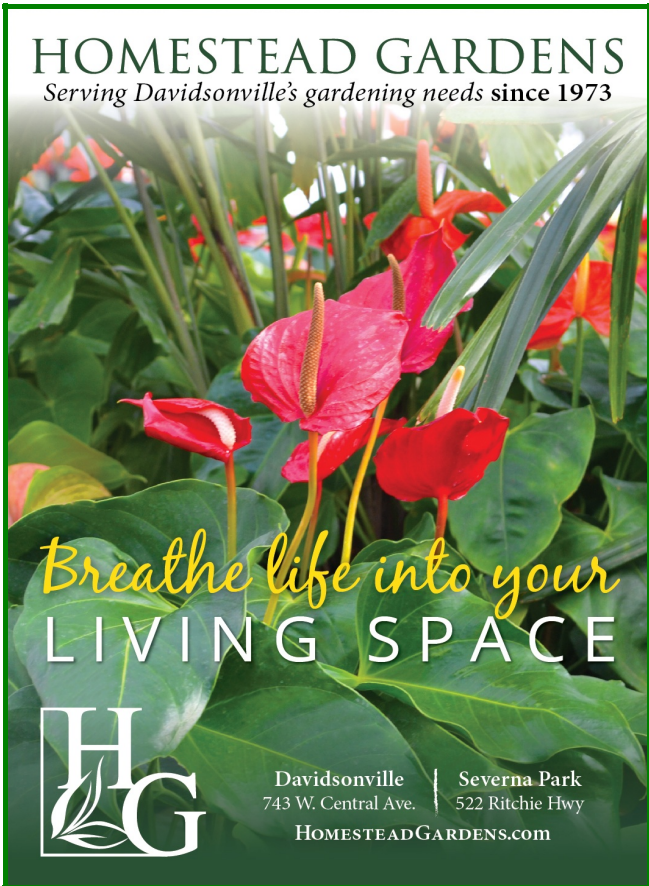
Many thanks to Robbie and Cathy Hall and to Richard and Mary Evelyn Mayr for their contributions to DACA in addition to renewing their memberships.

Thanks also to the Chesapeake Environmental Protection Association for their continuing support of DACA.

In memoriam
James Duckett
 Died December 6, 2021
 LIFC member of DACA since 1996

In Memoriam
Diana "Dee" Stoehr
 DACA member since 2016
 Mother of DACA member Tracy Powelson

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Agriculture is More than Driving a Tractor

Margie Chase told us things non-farmers don't know

- The AA County Farm Bureau (AACFB) is sponsoring a series of Legislative Meet and Greets at the Maryland Farm Bureau (formerly the Ruritan Club), 3358 Davidsonville Road, at 6:30 pm. They are scheduled for January 10 (this will be virtual), February 14th, and March 14th. Each candidate will have 20 minutes to speak and then will respond to questions received in advance. The moderator will maintain a strict time schedule to accommodate all the candidates. Topics that FB President John Faber wants them to touch on are deer hunting/venison, solar power, redistricting, the Lothian grain elevator, promoting small business/agriculture, agritourism, and climate change.

On January 10, invited guests were Delegate Sid Saab, Dist 33 incumbent; County Executive Stuart Pittman, incumbent; Council member Jessica Haire, County Executive candidate; Dawn Gile, District 33 Senate Candidate (Ed Reilly's seat); Shawn Livingston, District 7 County Council candidate (Jessica Haire's seat); and Travis Lenol, candidate District 31-B Delegate.

On February 14, invited guests are incumbent Senator Sarah Elfreth, District 30; Douglas Rathell, candidate for Delegate, District 30A; Dawn Pulliam, candidate for County Council, District 7; Kevin Burke, candidate for Delegate, District 33; Courtney Buiniskis, candidate for Delegate District 30B, and Shannon Leadbetter, candidate for County Council District 7.

On March 14, the guests include Chris Jahn, candidate for County Executive, and James Estep, candidate for County Council District 4.

If you wish to attend any of these events, please contact the AA County Farm Bureau secretary, Chris Griffith, at aacofarmbureauinc@verizon.net or Ryan Zimmerman at rzimmerman@marylandfb.org to get the registration link or to have your name added to the attendance list. Please also state which date(s) you would like to attend.

- AA County Economic Development Corporation is seeking hunters to donate deer to the AA County Food Bank Venison Food Relief Program. Hunters are asked to take their deer to one of these processors to be given to the Food Bank: Harwood Butcher in Harwood or Hitchcock Taxidermy in Severn by February 3. AAEDC will pay for processor services.

- Margie noted that farmers are experiencing difficulties getting their livestock to butchers in a timely manner. Animals must be processed at the right age. Too long a delay and they age out of the meat category. The butchers say that this is Covid-related.

- The Southern High Future Farmers of America (FFA) members conducted a fundraising project to provide money and supplies to farmers in Kentucky who were impacted by the tornados that hit in December. Homestead Gardens served as the collection site for material items (not clothing) such as livestock gates, feed, etc., and they offered customers the opportunity to round up the value of their purchases to the next dollar amount.

Seven FFA members and three adults gave up their holiday week between Christmas and New Year's to drive to Kentucky and deliver what they had collected and help with the cleanup. As of January 6, they had raised more than \$35,000 in monetary donations and material items. In Kentucky they worked over 200 hours and scoured about 300 acres of farmland to remove all kinds of debris. They removed more than a half mile of fencing and helped put up new fencing. Some of the items they were able to get donated or purchased were stump/post pullers, car magnets (to help find nails and other metal in the fields), water troughs, feed buckets, livestock feed and minerals, iron fencing T-posts, and much, much more. Southern High School's Future Farmers of America is the only agriculture education program in the AA County public schools.

Thanks to Margie Chase for showing news from the farmers' point of view.

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Patuxent River Commission *(continued from page 1)* on plans and reports related to the Patuxent River and its watershed” (PRC website). Since the creation of the Patuxent Riverkeeper position in 2004, that work has included collaboration with Fred Tutman and his organization on the river’s health report cards, trash pickups, and the creation of a “water trail” for canoes and kayaks to tour the river. Tutman has put his back into it, leading his River Roughnecks on cleanup expeditions through the mud to remove tires, pieces of autos and appliances, fallen trees, and other trash from the river. His work as the Patuxent Riverkeeper, an independent role focused on conservation, is central to the commission’s activity and mission.

Baltimore *Sun* reporter Scott Dance wrote in the *Capital* (December 29, page 1) that the Maryland State Planner failed to reappoint Fred Tutman to the Patuxent River Commission. Tutman, Barbara Sollner-Webb, and Al Tucker said they were blindsided by the decision not to reappoint them to the commission.

Looking back to 2018, it was a shock to members when Maryland Secretary of Planning Robert McCord, whose department houses the commission, told them they didn’t have the authority to discuss new real estate developments within the Patuxent watershed, even though such projects greatly influence the river’s health. The commissioners sought legal clarification and were advised they could indeed carry on raising concerns. Tutman, who has been vocal about development concerns, said he can’t think of another reason he’d be dismissed from the commission. “It says to commissioners, ‘If you step out of line, you do so at your own peril,’” Tutman said.

McCord said in a statement that the push to quell the commission’s development discussions came out of concerns that the state body might overreach into what should be a matter for local governments to handle. Tutman said he had the river’s interests at heart when he brought up concerns about development. Roofs and pavement increase runoff, which sends more sediment and pollutants into waterways.



The Patuxent watershed extends through seven counties

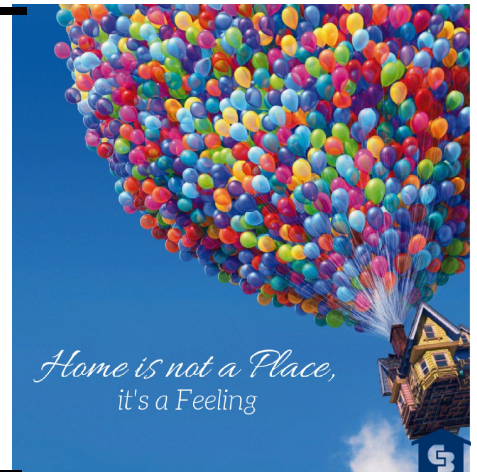
Chris Perry, the commission’s vice chair, said he shares Tutman’s concerns. Perry said neither he nor commission chair Mike Leszcz had been informed about the dismissals or given any explanation for them. Tutman held the position designated for a farmer since 1998. He grows vegetables, works as a blacksmith, and leases crop land on 200 acres near the Patuxent in Prince George’s County that has been his family’s home for a century. Tutman worries that without a seat on the panel, it will become harder to collaborate with the commission—and, by extension, harder to promote the health of the 115-mile Patuxent. And he worries the commission will be less receptive to that sort of outreach going forward. *(Continued on page 5)*



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Patuxent River *(Continued from page 4)*

Perry said Tutman and Sollner-Webb (professor emerita of biological chemistry at the Johns Hopkins University) were by “leaps and bounds the most active people on the commission,” helping set the body’s agenda and lead discussion. He said both “will be sorely missed.... I don’t think we can get another commissioner that would be that connected to the river,” Perry said, “so it’s a really huge loss to the Patuxent River Commission to not have Fred on it anymore.”

Both Sollnar-Webb and Tutman recalled contentious confrontations with McCord over discussions about development projects. In interviews, both raised concern about the independence of the commission and confirmed they had voted in favor of motions that discouraged development near the river.

Fred Tutman is a longtime friend of DACA, instrumental in starting Green Expo 12 years ago and a continual Expo exhibitor. Al Tucker and CEPA are also longtime friends of DACA who participate in Green Expo.

The Patuxent River forms Davidsonville’s entire western border with Prince George’s County.



University of Maryland Extension Service

The University of Maryland Extension will host *Good Morning Farmer!*, an online gathering place where farmers can discuss topics of interest, learn from experts, and provide support through community fellowship.

Winter/Spring Sessions 8:00–9:00 a.m. on ZOOM:
February 16: The No-Tillage Revolution: A history lesson still relevant today?

March 16: GMO Agriculture: Where are we going?
April 13: IPM: How to make it work on your farm?

Register on-line for this event at: <https://extension.umd.edu/locations/anne-arundel-county> or contact the Anne Arundel County Extension Office at 410-222-3906.

Love and protect the opossums!

From National Wildlife Federation

Did you know that one opossum can consume up to 5,000 ticks in a single season? These remarkable and unfussy omnivores are protectors, not pests. They eliminate disease-carrying ticks and clean up our ecosystems by eating rotting plants and dead animals.

Opossums are nature’s pest control and cleanup crew. But many people don’t realize the important role they play in our backyards and communities, and may even try to harm them.

Despite the widespread belief that opossums are aggressive and spread diseases, America’s only native marsupials are actually resistant to diseases like rabies. This gentle, misunderstood species keeps our ecosystems healthy and helps keep humans safe from tick-borne diseases like Lyme disease. Opossums also prey on snakes, including venomous varieties such as copperheads and rattlesnakes. However, the remarkably adaptive opossum isn’t immune to habitat destruction and other human-caused dangers.


Rolling over and playing possum is not their plan for defense, but simply a reflex—frightened almost to death. *(Editor’s note: When our dog caught one and it played dead, he quickly found it boring and walked away.)*



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School Report from Cyndi Morgan at DACA’s January 6 Board Meeting

Anne Arundel County Public Schools are holding in-person classes. Buses are still an issue with bus drivers having to isolate if tested positive for Covid-19.

Regarding staff support for schools, as teachers fall ill to Covid-19, schools will determine on a case-by-case basis whether there is enough staff to cover a class, a grade level, or whether the school will shut down and go to virtual learning. The County Department of Health will determine if a threshold is reached requiring a class, a grade level, or a school to be closed due to an outbreak.

The isolation period for students and staff who test positive is ten days. As it is ever changing, you can find the latest updates to isolation and quarantine periods online at AACPS.org/covidprotocols. There is no option to test out early from isolation or quarantine.

Covid-19 Antigen Rapid Test Kits are being shipped to AACPS, and one kit will be sent home with each child in mid-January. The kits will help to determine whether a child must isolate if they test positive for Covid.

The Board of Education voted yesterday (1/5/22) to have the 2022–2023 school year start the Monday before Labor Day, August 29, 2022. This rescinds Governor Hogan’s ruling that schools should not open before Labor Day in his hope to promote tourism on that weekend.

Start School Later

by Lisa VanBuskirk

The AACPS Board of Education will not renew Superintendent George Arlotto’s contract when it ends in June 2022. Since Fall 2006 (yes, 15 years ago), Dr. Arlotto has been meeting with parents concerned about school start times. Given his multiple opportunities to lead on the issue and his ultimate failure to do so, I personally am not sad to see him go.

In the Board’s press release, school start times for the 2022–2023 school year was one of three items listed as important tasks for the new superintendent. The Board will likely hire a consultant to help them advertise, review, and select the new superintendent. There may be opportunities for public comments along the way.

At their December 15 meeting, the Board members elected a new president (and a strong start times supporter), Dr. Joanna Tobin, along with Robert Silkworth as vice president. I am confident they will be a strong team to guide the Board in the superintendent selection process while also keeping start times at the forefront of the transition process to new leadership. Many thanks to outgoing Board President Melissa Ellis and Vice President Dana Schallheim for their leadership over the past two years in advancing transportation and school start times.

Also during the December 15 meeting, Dr. Arlotto released his fiscal year 2023 budget proposal, which included, several transportation (Continued on page 7)



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Start School Later *(continued from page 6)*
 items: ten percent COLA increases for bus drivers, 32 additional buses to address population growth and existing overcrowding on buses, and \$575,000 for drivers, aides, and vans to begin transporting students to nonpublic settings, as permitted by a new state law. There are opportunities to provide written or oral comments on the proposed budget (transportation and also salaries, teaching and staff positions, etc.) in January 2022. In February 2022, the Board will vote on the budget and send it to the County Executive and County Council.

The new state law to allow vehicles other than large school buses to transport students, to which Dr. Arlotto referred, was passed in the most recent legislative session. Draft regulations were released on November 19.

Regarding transportation, Prismatic Services continues to make progress with new bus routes for next school year. They are meeting regularly with AACPS staff, so I remain confident in that process. Unfortunately, I have not heard anything about an AACPS team addressing all the other operational issues impacted by changes in bell times (athletics, activities, crossing guards, food service, contracts, etc.). I hope that with continued strong leadership from the Board of Education, these topics will be fully addressed in the spring semester.

I wish everyone a healthy and safe start to 2022, which WILL be the year Anne Arundel County’s school start times will be healthier, safer, and more age-appropriate.

Sincerely,
 Lisa VanBuskirk
 Chapter Leader
 Start School Later
 AA County Action Network

Dog Park Development on Rossback Road Continues

Residents of the area at the west end of Rossback Road where it meets Route 50 are concerned about the potential use of a property for a dog park and social club for dog owners.

In 2019, Bonnie McLeod applied for a permit on the land, in the name of Pawblicity Hounds LLC. Lori Rhodes, then an Administrator with AA County’s Office of Planning and Zoning, summed up the application and pertinent facts:

“The property owner, Bonnie McLeod proposes to develop a private dog park club on a ten-acre property located off Rossback Road in Davidsonville. The property is zoned RA-Rural Agricultural. Rossback Road is designated as a scenic and historic road. The Zoning Ordinance allows private clubs with less than 125 onsite parking spaces as a conditional use in all residential districts. The use shall meet the following requirements:

- Each structure shall be located at least 100 feet from all lot lines;
- required onsite parking may not be located in a required setback;
- structures and onsite parking may cover no more than 60% of the lot; and
- a facility located in an RA District shall not be located on a road other than a scenic or historic rural road.

A private club is defined in the code to mean a facility that is used for social or recreational purposes and that is not operated primarily for profit or commercial purposes.

Although the proposed use is unconventional, this Office concluded that this use meets the broad definition of private club because it does not have to be non-profit, but cannot have profit as its primary goal.”

On March 3, 2019, the engineering company Messick and Associates conducted a community meeting to inform the nearby residents of the west end of Rossback Road, Governor Bridge Road, *(Continued on page 8)*

Ray Alcorn

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Dog Park

(continued from page 7)

and Lerch Farm Court and the north end of Patuxent River Road about the proposal in their neighborhood. Having heard from these residents, DACA’s board voted to oppose the dog park based on zoning, unsuitability of the road to support more traffic, and the business and entertainment aspect of the project. DACA stated these reasons in a May 28, 2019 letter, to Phil Hager, then Director of Planning and Zoning.

On December 7, 2021, Messick and Associates held a second community information meeting by Zoom to update the neighbors on the revised plan and to answer their questions. About 15 residents attended the meeting and heard Robert Tipton’s detailed description of stream and wetland protection, preservation of wooded areas, construction of a 50 foot by 34 foot clubhouse and a separate outdoor pavilion and other amenities, chain link fencing for several dog play areas, and a 57-space parking lot adequate for up to 113 members to use the club at the same time.

When the meeting was opened to questions, it was evident that the residents’ primary concern is the condition of Rossback Road, already besieged by speeding traffic of motorcycles and dump trucks, and the impact of increased traffic going to the dog park and inadequacy of the traffic study. The developer’s request for a

permit to improve the road was denied as it is a Scenic Historic Road. Mr. Tipton said trees are to be pruned to improve the sight line near the park entrance. Other concerns expressed include handling of septic system and noncompliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. He noted that a safety study will be conducted to determine if safety is a factor in county approval of the plan.

The next step is to complete the site development review process, lasting perhaps three to six months; then seek approval for the grading plan, another three to six months, and the building permit for two buildings and fencing, total up to two years, and then a pre-construction meeting and inspection.

On December 21, 2021, DACA wrote a letter of opposition to P&Z Director Steven Kaii-Zeigler, County Executive Steuart Pittman, District 7 County Council member Jessica Haire, and James Kitchin, Director of Community Engagement and Constituent Services.

(Photo by insider.com)



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County Council Enacts Three Gun Bills

Council Bill 103-21, sponsored by Amanda Fiedler and Nathan Volke, allows more locations to gun shops and ammunition sales, was passed unanimously by the County Council on January 3.

Bill #108-21 sponsored by Lisa Rodvien, requires the Health Department to prepare, and gun sellers to hand out, safety literature and emergency phone numbers to gun buyers at time of sales. This bill passed unanimously.

Bill #109-21 Security Measures for the Sale of Firearms introduced safety measures, sponsored by Andrew Pruski at the request of an AA County police officer. The Bill applies to all dealers within 100 yards of or in a park, house of worship, school, public building, or other place of public assembly. It was passed on party lines with Volke, Haire, and Fiedler opposing; Lacey, Pickard, Pruski, and Rodvien voted yes. AA County has 21 gun stores.

Capital Reporter Dana Monro covered the January 3 Council hearing on bills #108-21 and 109-21, quoting testimony of citizens who opposed the requirement to distribute safety literature. The county administration supported both of these bills.

Regarding Bill #103-21, Growth Action Network (GAN) provided background information on gun violence in Anne Arundel County. "The Anne Arundel County Gun Violence Prevention Task Force (GVPFA) issued a final report in June 2020 showing that there were 1,688 gun-related violent crimes and 260 firearm-related deaths committed in Anne Arundel County in the 2014–2018 time period. That pace has continued unabated into the present. Now comes County Council bill #103-21 (Zoning–Commercial Districts–Gunsmiths and Ammunition Sales Facilities) that opens more than 100 new locations to sales of firearms and ammunition by classifying gunsmithing and ammunition sales as a permitted use on land parcels zoned C3. Although

gunsmithing is not defined in the County code, multiple dictionaries define "gunsmith" as a "person who makes, sells, or repairs small firearms."

Gun and ammunition sales are currently limited to areas with C4 zoning, which is the least restrictive Commercial zoning. It is the only commercial zoning category that permits siting of adult bookstores, animal hospitals, amusement parks, storage facilities, construction yards, and similar businesses. Although they are allowed in C4, retail shops, grocery stores, bakeries, banks, and other business of that type tend to cluster in C3. The map to the right shows the distribution of parcels zoned C3 or C4 throughout the County.

Opening C3-zoned areas will increase the proliferation of gun shops into mainstream retail shopping areas. It will contribute to the perception of guns as normal implements that every household might need. Many other civilized countries would consider this lunacy, and, of course, it directly conflicts with the goals of the County's Gun Violence Prevention Task Force.

Indoor gun ranges are a permitted by special exception in C3. The sponsors of the bill, Councilmembers Fiedler and Volke, describe the bill as an effort to make zoning for gun shops consistent with the zoning for indoor gun ranges. However, this would suggest the possibility of "full service" gun shops with shooting ranges where gun sales could be increased by allowing potential customers to try guns before purchase.

The zoning map shows that most C3 zones are near C4 zones, so there is little motivation for permitting gun shops in C3. How many gun shops does a community need? Does a shooting range really need to have an ammunition vendor immediately nearby? Is there any public benefit associated with a shooting range also selling or modifying guns?"

GAN urged its members and guests to review Bill 103-21 and contact their County Council member to express their concerns.



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Make Green Infrastructure the centerpiece of development planning

It is important to understand that “green” infrastructure is not just trees, parks, and open space, but a tool to achieve critical public health and safety, environmental, and related objectives. For example, it plays a role in reducing flow of polluted runoff into rivers and streams due to development; contributes to efforts to address climate change by capturing and filtering air pollutants, and provides the physical and psychological benefits of open space and greenways. It gives us places to escape our increasingly developed landscape and relax.

The Green Infrastructure network also provides new opportunities for a connected trail network that enables more human-powered mobility (walking and biking), reducing our reliance on motor vehicles that create traffic congestion and pollute our air and water. Home prices are clearly linked to proximity to green spaces. And tree-lined streets provide a sense of place in communities. In short, Green Infrastructure isn’t just environmental “stuff”... it is smart development that leads to less traffic, cleaner environment, healthier communities, greater quality of life, and economic benefits.


Given all of the above, planning should begin with a focus on how to maximize those benefits by thinking about these elements as a part of designing growth and development from the outset. Let’s see trees and open space as tools of develop-

ment, not impediments to development. We suggest that rather than figuring out how to cram as many houses, commercial buildings and “gray” infrastructure into a community to maximize commercial and residential square footage, development should start with considering how best to use existing trees and open space. They are assets to complement and enhance both residential and commercial spaces and to improve the health of the Bay and our waterways. Let’s design an environment that promotes both healthy people and a healthy economy and allows us to be less worried about the “flesh eating” bacteria in our water described in a recent *Capital* article. After all, OUR economy is directly linked to the health of our Bay. And, let’s not risk killing the goose (the Bay) that laid the golden egg.

In sum, let’s start FIRST by designing our future with consideration of the green we need and want to keep, then determine how and where to expand the grey infrastructure. Clearly, the Green Infrastructure is precious, and we must be sure that it protected by conservation easements, purchase of development rights, outright fee simple (Continued on page 15)

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DACA needs to increase dues and advertising fees

Over the past 40 years, DACA’s membership has held steady at about 300 members, approximately ten percent of Davidsonville’s 3,000 postal patrons. The post office count of postal patrons is the only measurement I have of the population here.

In 1973 the Executive Committee set the dues at \$3.00 per person and after several years the Board of Directors increased it to \$5.00 then \$10.00. These increases had no effect on the membership number; no one dropped out because they could not afford the dues.

The *Villager* is the greatest expense for DACA, essential for communicating with its members and the county officials we need to address on issues. In the *Villager*’s earliest years, local businesses bought advertising space in the newsletter and the editor learned how to put their information into a suitable format. Pricing of ads was a matter of groping in the dark with no guidance. In truth, the entire adventure of producing the *Villager* has been learning process starting from no prior experience (and written on an IBM Selectric typewriter!).

I happily took good advice from readers and a professional newspaperman, John Quinan of the Washington *Star*, who taught me how to lay it out by cut and

paste on copy boards to take to a printer in Washington. This business printed the *Villager* for no cost to DACA at the behest of a Washington union local president who lived in Davidsonville. My children collated and stapled and stuck on address labels. I had to carry the entire print run to the post office to mail to readers—3,000+ copies were really heavy. Dealing with ever-changing postal regulations was a challenge.

Thanks to Peter Perry and his son George who dragged me into the 20th Century in 1976 to start me on our first computer, paid for by a member and since replaced many times. We learned to include AA County officials in the mailing list to receive the *Villager* and, in the early days sent DACA’s comments on issues by typed letters through the US Postal Service. We eagerly all learned to use e-mail. *Villager* and DACA thrived by the service of volunteers, just it does now.

Dues income has shrunk. Many members opted to pay \$100 for a Life membership—we never dreamed that DACA would still be going more than 20 years. Older members are retiring and moving to other places; some have died. Not enough new members are replacing them despite the annual postal patron issue to tell new residents about DACA. With technological improvements arriving by leaps and bounds over these last 40 years, costs have skyrocketed, even though Minute Man Press gives us every possible discount. For many of those years there was a comfortable cushion of savings. The cushion is very thin now. DACA thanks the many members who added contributions to their dues checks, ranging from \$5.00 to \$100.00. Even as new members pay their \$10, income is not keeping up with the costs of printing and mailing the newsletter.

The Board asked the editor to seek methods to cut costs, while discussing the options of raising dues and advertisements. The first step taken has been to print in black/white, except for the March-April issue which invites new members. It is inevitable that dues and ad fees will go up.
Gail Enright, Editor

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Beware the US Postal “Service”

The County Executive’s office warned us in December of change in postal service delivery time:

“On October 1, 2021, the United States Postal Service began changing first-class mail delivery time frames. This change may result in slower delivery of bills and payments through the USPS. This is demonstrably proven by failure to deliver bills and payments! If using USPS, please consider mailing your payments earlier to accommodate for these delays.”

“For faster more convenient payment options you may:

- Make walk-in payments to any of the County’s three cashier locations or drop off your check or money order payment in the yellow drop box located at all three County cashier locations: Arundel Center, 44 Calvert Street; Annapolis Heritage Center, 2664 Riva Road; or Arundel Center North, 101 Crain Highway North in Glen Burnie.
- Or make a payment online by eCheck for an \$.89 convenience fee or by credit card or debit card (convenience fees also apply).

“If you have questions regarding payments or billing, please contact the Office of Finance, Customer Service Office at (410) 222-1144 or email us at custserv@aacounty.org. For more information, please visit the Finance Office website at www.aacounty.org/departments/finance.”

We have learned that everything you mail from the new Davidsonville post office has to be sent first to Baltimore, even if it is to be delivered in Davidsonville, then it is returned to Davidsonville by way of an intermediate center for delivery to recipients, all in the guise of “efficiency.”

After sending the November–December issue of the *Villager* to the printer on November 23 for paper recipients, my home copy was delivered three weeks later on December 15. I went to the new post office on the 18th to pick up the *Villager* addressed to P.O. Box 222. Surprise! No *Villager* in the DACA P.O. box. The postal worker on duty told me that they had delivered all they had received. They finally arrived a week later.

There was never any doubt that the Davidsonville Post Office had to move from its location in the village, as the lease with Holy Family Church expired and the church needed to use its property, and probably no doubt that the new location on the corner of Central Avenue and Patuxent River Road is the best possible new site. Even so, it is much less convenient to residents east of Davidsonville Road. The new location is not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act: no handicap parking near the door; a higher step than usual to the curb; and no curb cut for wheelchair users. Their post office staff have asked higher-ups to provide an outdoor mailbox outside the building, but they also have to wait, and wait, and wait. What happened to the mailbox outside the old post office? And so, we live without it, thankful at least that the USPS did not close Davidsonville down.

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Chesapeake Cownose Rays

by Marissa Sandoval, SERC newsletter Winter 2021

Cownose rays get their name from their distinct square face that looks just like a cow’s snout. These fish can reach a width of over three feet, with a tail nearly twice the length of their kite-shaped bodies. Cownose rays are popular aquarium animals. They look like they’re smiling.



Photo: SERC

Rays are subtle movers—so much so that they’re often mistaken for sharks. Swimming close to the surface of the ocean, a wing breaking the water looks just like a shark’s dorsal fin to folks on the beach. From a small boat, to see a pair of wings breaking the surface is truly eerie.

Cownose rays are particularly vulnerable to climate change and unregulated sport bow hunting. They can live for more than 20 years. But with an average of six years to reach maturity, if they are

overharvested it would take the population a long time to recover. To help protect their numbers, Maryland is drafting what could be the first cownose ray fishery management plan on the U.S. East Coast.

Every summer and fall, cownose rays migrate between Cape Canaveral, Florida, and the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. When traveling south, male and female cownose rays generally follow the warmer water temperature. But when they return, something else cues the females to reach the Chesapeake in early June, looking for a shallow tributary to give birth to a single “pup”.

A few weeks after the females reach the Bay, the males come up for the mating season. You can usually tell a male from a female since he’ll be a little smaller and seemingly eager, splashing about a female. This means that once a female gives birth, it’s not long before her gestation period begins all over again. Mature females can be pregnant for over 11 months of the year!

The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center is a 2,650-acre environmental research and educational facility operated by the Smithsonian Institution. It is located on the Rhode and West Rivers near Edgewater in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, near the Chesapeake Bay. The address is 647 Contees Wharf Road, Edgewater, MD 21037.

SERC is open for hiking and paddling Monday through Saturday, 8:30 am-4:30 pm. Closed Sundays and federal holidays. “You’ll walk through forests, over marshes, and stumble across secluded beaches” All visitors should do a self-health check before arriving, and bring a face covering if you need to use our indoor restrooms.



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 Del. Sid Saab 410-841-3551 sid.saab@house.state.md.us

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boardoffice@aacps.org garlotto@aacps.org

The Auxiliary of Anne Arundel Medical Center, 2001 Medical Parkway, Annapolis, needs volunteers ages 18 and older, daytime and evening hours, weekdays and weekends. Positions include opportunities in patient interaction, customer service, and retail assistance. The auxiliary has been serving the hospital since 1944. Volunteers are an integral part of AAMC's mission of providing patient-centered, high-quality health care services. Please call the auxiliary office 443-481-5050 to volunteer or to request more information.

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Oak leaves changing colors

Dept. of Natural Resources says Give the Gift of Trees

DNR offers shoppers the opportunity to buy a gift for a loved one, for future generations, and for the environment.

The Gift of Trees program allows Marylanders to purchase native trees — either a single tree or a grove of ten trees — for planting in honor of a celebration, commemoration, or observation. Maryland Forest Service staff help choose the appropriate location and species to best assure the tree flourishes well into the future.



Davidsonville Country Living magazine is dedicated to residents of our fair community and features families and individuals who make Davidsonville the place we love. It also features an occasional local history or nostalgic interest.

If you are a Davidsonville resident not currently receiving the magazine and would like to, please send your email address to david.grabau@n2pub.com. David Grabau will email you a free PDF version which you can open and read.



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Tickets are available from Maryland Hall at www.marylandhall.org/events/ or call 410-263-5544. Individual concert tickets cost \$25 each. Students are always admitted free but still need a student ticket ordered through Maryland Hall. Tickets are also available at the door on concert dates.

Go to <http://lso-music.org> to purchase tickets, sign up for our newsletter, and to donate. Our mailing address is Londontowne Symphony Orchestra, PO Box 926, Edgewater, MD 21037.

Green Infrastructure *(continued from page 10)*
acquisition, or other approaches. We should take full advantage of state, federal, and private grant programs to accelerate protection of our natural areas, and Green Infrastructure preservation funding should be given high priority in the County budget.

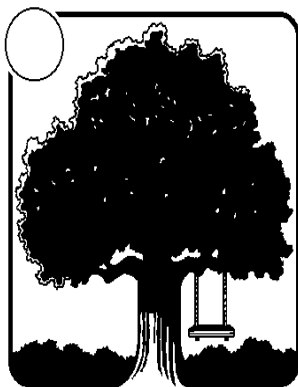
Green Infrastructure is a key element of functional, livable, and healthy landscapes that benefit all citizens. Let’s give it the importance that it deserves.

December 7, 2021

Content provided by Jim Lyons and Jon Korin
The Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities is a non-partisan coalition of 25 local and state organizations advocating for sustainable growth and environmental protections to safeguard and enhance residents’ quality of life.



To demonstrate DACA’s concern for supporting Green Infrastructure and improving the environment, we ordered 500 trees for our Twelfth Annual Tree Give Away. Plan to come early to get the best selection from 200 Red- buds, 100 Southern Crabapples, 100 Sycamores, and 100 White Oaks. They all went fast last year!



Optimism for Spring 2022

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aacfnsecretary@gmail.com



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The Villager

Newsletter of the Davidsonville Area Civic Association



P. O. Box 222, Davidsonville, Maryland 21035

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Gail Enright Editor 410-533-4766
info@daca-md.org and on Facebook

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

JOIN DACA

MEMBERSHIP: I wish to be a member of DACA and receive the VILLAGER. At \$10.00 per year for each person, my check
for \$ _____ is enclosed, payable to DACA for membership for _____ person(s) 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 OR _____ for the Scholarship Fund.

DUES ARE \$10.00 PER PERSON PER YEAR

Mail to: DACA, P.O. BOX 222, Davidsonville, MD 21035.

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Telephones _____ Today's date _____

Your comments, your interests?