



Volume 45, Number 4

THE DARNESTOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

December 2009

[www.darnestowncivic.org](http://www.darnestowncivic.org)

## *Civic Association News and Notes*

### *Notes from the President*

by Lisa Patterson-Troike

Happy Holidays and Season's Greetings! Hard to believe we are already in December and will soon be celebrating a new year. I hope the winter isn't too hard on us here in Darnestown. It can really put a wrench into your daily plans when you can't even get out of your driveway.

We are happy to report that we have been using our new office space for monthly board meetings. A big thank you goes out to Frank Cornelius for his generous gift of a conference table and chairs that fit perfectly. Everyone seems to enjoy the meetings, even if they are a bit crowded at times. We are also sharing the building with a new tenant, *The Surrey*, and are thrilled to have a business that blends in so well with our community.

On the morning of Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, our dog was bitten on the face by a sick fox. We contacted animal control and were unable to catch the fox, so he is still on the loose. Having lived here 12+ years, I never thought such a thing would happen. We definitely think the fox is sick but do not know whether it is rabies, mange or something else. Our dog is going to be ok, but there are several things I have learned in the past few days about rabies. Rabies is most commonly spread through the saliva of an infected animal. The virus can live for some

time outside of the host's body. If you suspect you or your pet has come into contact with saliva of an infected animal, the first thing you should do is wash the area thoroughly with soap and warm water, then go see a doctor. In order for the virus to be spread, it must penetrate into the body through a bite, cut or other opening. If you are a spelunker, the virus can penetrate through the air into your nose from guano of infected bats. The immunization for rabies is simple and no longer consists of several abdominal injections. Please alert animal control, the DCA and your neighbors if you see a sick animal. Rabies is fatal if not treated and must be taken very seriously.

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Next  
DCA Town Meeting  
Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 p.m.**

Darnestown Presbyterian Church  
Route 28 at Turkey Foot Road



**Don't miss the annual  
Holiday Tree Lighting  
Loads of fun for everyone!**

Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>

See Page 3 for details!



## - DEADLINE -

**All items for inclusion in the next issue of The Little Acorn are due to the Editor no later than February 1, 2010. The deadlines will remain firm.**

Articles for *The Little Acorn* may be mailed to 14100 Darnestown Road, Darnestown, MD 20874 OR E-mailed to [acorneditor@comcast.net](mailto:acorneditor@comcast.net). Please follow-up by phone or email if you do not receive confirmation from the editor that your submission has been received. The editor can be reached at 240-683-0103. **ALL NEWS IS WELCOME!**

### THE LITTLE ACORN STAFF

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 Darnestown Heritage Park: Chris Collins, Scott Mostrom  
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 Directory: Sarah Scherer  
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 Utility Reliability: Art Slesinger  
 Welcome: Lara Wibeto  
 Wildlife: Bruce Deppa  
 Zoning & Dev. Review: Pam DuBois, Steve Ellis

**If you are considering starting a business that requires a Special Exception, start by contacting the DCA.**

Inquiries concerning the Darnestown Civic Association should be directed to Lisa Patterson-Troiike (301-548-0999; [lisaapatterson@aol.com](mailto:lisaapatterson@aol.com)) or mailed to DCA, 14100 Darnestown Road, Darnestown, MD 20874.

### BABY SITTERS

Emily Agate*	age 13	301-417-0980
Sarah Agate*	age 15	301-417-0980
Briana Boothe*	age 13	301-977-4247
Chris Helmey	age 15	301-519-3814
Jordan Helmey	age 17	301-519-3814
Kiersten Helmey	age 13	301-519-3814
Jenna Kane	age 16	301-926-3612
Zoe Kaplan*	age 13	301-997-8027
Betsi Micholas	age 13	301-990-0221
Drew Micholas	age 13	301-990-0221
Mitchell O'Rourke*	age 13	301-947-5487
Claire Pohl	age 14	301-926-8818
Katie Pohl+	age 16	301-926-8818
Trish Poulos	adult	301-208-1007
Kelsey Warren	age 14	301-216-1919
Stefanie Zaner*	age 18	240-678-8319

### MOTHER'S HELPERS

Emily Pohl	age 12	301-467-8801
Zoe Kaplan	age 13	301-977-8027

*\*Completed babysitting certification program.  
 -Certified lifeguard. CPR.*

### PET SITTERS/HOUSE SITTERS

Gwynne Cafaro	age 12	301-963-7178
Chris Helmey	age 15	301-519-3814
Jordan Helmey	age 17	301-519-3814
Kiersten Helmey	age 13	301-519-3814
Zoe Kaplan	age 13	301-997-8027
Mac O'Rourke	age 12	301-947-5487
Trish Poulos	adult	301-208-1007
Grace Wallerstedt	age 19	301-590-0698
Stefanie Zaner	age 18	240-678-8319

*\*Pet sitting only.*

### MUSIC LESSONS

TJ Callahan	Guitar (summer)	301-379-5646
Brandon Corydon	Guitar	301-221-0456
Jennifer Suess	Voice	301-977-2605
Michael Waddell	Trombone/Horn	301-990-6770
Stefanie Zaner	Clarinet	240-678-8319

### NOTARY SERVICES

Laura Bivans	301-977-4734
Bruce Deppa	301-963-0567
Tina Kalil	301-948-5364
Elisa Lane	301-990-2993
Frank Mielenz	301-987-7190

## **Notes From the President**

(Continued From Page 1)

Once again, it is our annual membership drive! Membership dues letters were sent out a few months ago. Thanks to all of you who have paid your dues. If you haven't yet paid, a membership form is located on the back page of this *Little Acorn*. A big thank you goes out to Jean Jurgena for handling all the dues for us. It is a big job, having to check name/address/phone/ and email changes. Jean has been handling this for as long as I can remember and we want her to know how much we appreciate her hard work.

Have a happy, healthy holiday season and new year!

## **Darnestown Directory**

by Sarah Scherer

Thanks to everyone for sending me information on changes in your neighborhood. Please add these neighbors to that handy "notes" page in the back of your 2008 Directory.

Herbert "Ed" & Marjorie Larson  
14304 Brickowe Ct.  
301-977-7187

Lynne Gummo  
13501 Esworthy Rd  
240-683-3670

Please contact me with any changes or corrections at 240-683-8533 or [sarahscherer@comcast.net](mailto:sarahscherer@comcast.net). Thank you!

## **Membership Committee**

by Jean Jurgena

Thanks to all residents who have already mailed your dues payment for the 2010 year and corrected any necessary information on the return form. Returning this form with any changes enables DCA to keep our database accurate and up to date. A new Directory will be printed this year and the database is the primary source of information for the directory. This database is used for DCA mailings and printing the directory – DCA is the sole user of the information in the database and does not sell or rent this information to anyone. You may have noticed recently DCA sent out mass e-mails to residents of DCA whose e-mail addresses we had on file to share important information that may be of concern to residents before the next printing of The Little Acorn Newsletter. We also use the dues mailing responses to help identify residents who have moved to or from the area. Undeliverable mail is returned by the postal service

and helps provide us with information letting us know a house is vacant or has changed hands and we need to correct the database. This is always an ongoing job, so in between mailings, if you know a neighbor has moved from your neighborhood, it will be helpful if you will pass the information along to either myself or the Directory Chairperson, Sarah Scherer. Thank you and keep those dues coming!

Contact Jean Jurgena, Membership Chairman, at [jmjurgena@hotmail.com](mailto:jmjurgena@hotmail.com) or 301-840-1187.

## **Social Committee**

by Lisa Patterson-Troike

The Darnestown Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the corner of Ancient Oak and Darnestown Roads. It really is a thrill to be out on a cold December evening with other Darnestownians and enjoy warming up by the fire with cookies, hot chocolate, music and holiday lights! If enough people come, I'm sure Santa will fly in to wish us a very happy and healthy holiday season. I can never figure out where he parks his sleigh and reindeer...

Since the hoedown fell after the deadline for this issue, I will write a thorough account of the night's activities in our next issue of *The Little Acorn*!

## **Welcome Committee**

by Lara Wibeto

I am happy to report that we have four new families that received welcome baskets in the past few weeks. In this fall's baskets there are autumn scented candles, gourmet scone and pumpkin cake mixes, and a lot of information about our area. Thanks to all of the families for receiving me so warmly. I have compiled the top three reasons why individuals and families have chosen Darnestown in which to reside:

1. For a job transfer in Montgomery County or Washington, DC area.
2. To live in a peaceful community in which to raise a family.
3. To leave an urban lifestyle for a suburban or more rural one.

FAQs of new Darnestownians...

1. What is the Darnestown Civic Association?
2. How often does the DCA meet?
3. How do I join the DCA?
4. What events are held by the DCA?



5. Which public school will my children attend? (Or private schools in the area)?
6. What are the closest universities?
7. What are the best local places to dine?
8. What are the best fall festivities in our area?
9. What are the local newspapers?

I hope I helped answer some of your questions and that the websites I offered were helpful. There is so much to do here that I'm sure that all of our newcomers will find their favorite "things to see and do." I look forward to seeing you at our next town meeting and upcoming town events. Please don't forget to bag your fall leaves and pine needles in brown paper bags as plastic bags will not be accepted by county waste removal specialists. Enjoy the remainder of the fall season.

From everyone at the Darnestown Civic Association: "Welcome to Darnestown." Contact Lara Wibeto at lwibeto@verizon.net or 301-926-4028.

## ***Update from the Montgomery County Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board***

by Bob Thompson

### **Ike Leggett Hails County's Triple-A Bond Rating In Troubled Economic Times**

County Executive Ike Leggett announced 11/03/2009 that Montgomery County has maintained its Triple-A bond rating from three Wall Street bond rating agencies, just a month after Leggett and other County officials met with the agencies to present the latest information on the County's fiscal situation and describe actions taken by the County to weather the current economic downturn. Fitch, Moody's, and Standard & Poor's all affirmed the "AAA" rating – the highest achievable -- for the County. They all termed the outlook for Montgomery County as "stable." The Triple-A bond rating enables Montgomery County to sell long-term bonds at the most favorable rates, saving County taxpayers millions of dollars over the life of the bonds. The rating also serves as a benchmark for numerous other financial transactions, ensuring the lowest possible costs in those areas as well. "The County has demonstrated prudent fiscal management through strong financial planning and a commitment to reducing growth in out-year budgets. The fiscal 2010 budget was balanced with a combination of revenue enhancements and expenditure reductions, which included successful labor negotiations on wages and the elimination of roughly 400 positions," wrote Fitch. "Our ability to maintain our coveted Triple-A rating affirms my approach to reducing unsustainable increases in County spending, while investing in making

government more effective and creating opportunities for the growth of good jobs in the future," said Leggett. The current year's operating budget increase is the lowest in 18 years – an actual decrease in spending over the previous fiscal year. Over the past three years, County Executive Leggett and the Montgomery County Council have had to deal with budget shortfalls totaling \$1.2 billion, while protecting critical areas such as schools, public safety, and help for the most vulnerable. "Hard choices remain ahead," said Leggett, who on 10/26/2009 initiated a savings plan to cut \$30 million more from the current year's budget to begin the ongoing process to eliminate a projected \$370 million budget gap for the fiscal year that begins 07/01/2010. In closing he stated "Montgomery County will weather this downturn and, together, we will work to make sure we emerge from the downturn in a strong position to build a better future."

The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board represents more than 300,000 residents in the Upcounty area, north of Shady Grove Road and including the communities of Boyds, Clarksburg, Damascus, Darnestown, Derwood, Dickerson, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Laytonsville, Montgomery Village, North Potomac and Poolesville.

The 20-member Board advises the Director of the Upcounty Government Services Center, the County Executive, elected officials, and government staff. It provides input on which services and programs should be provided and how they will be delivered. The Board reviews and comments on the County's capital and operating budgets and master plans; assists with strategies to tailor services to regional needs; and conducts workshops and forums. Some members represent the Board on other ad hoc committees.

Members serve three-year terms without compensation, meeting certain Monday evenings of every month and occasionally on Saturdays. Members are expected to serve on at least one subcommittee, which meets approximately one evening every month on its own schedule.

We work with a wide range of social, land use, infrastructure, and public safety issues. We are committed to rational development planning and protection of the Agricultural Reserve. This is particularly relevant to Darnestown, as our community is immediately adjacent to it and the rural village nature reflected in planning and zoning is directly influenced by the Agricultural Reserve. As a representative of Darnestown, I am committed to communicating issues of importance to our community up to the County government, and carry news and information back to our community.

Additionally the Board is staffed by the Upcounty Regional Services team. The Director, Catherine Matthews, can be contacted at 240-777-8040 or via e-mail at [catherine.matthews@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:catherine.matthews@montgomerycountymd.gov). Bob Thompson can be contacted at 240-683-0103 or via email at [bob.thompson@comcast.net](mailto:bob.thompson@comcast.net). The Montgomery County web site—[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/index.asp](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/index.asp)—offers a wealth of information and available services for residents.

## ***County Planning and Development— Shady Grove Life Sciences Center and Gaithersburg West***

by Art Slesinger and Bob Thompson

At this moment it is unclear how the County Council will vote regarding the zoning changes proposed under the “Gaithersburg West Master Plan.” These changes would encourage the development of a Life Sciences Center around the hospital and Belward Farm on a massive scale. The proposal would allow up to 20 million square feet of commercial and residential space to be developed or redeveloped. It would permit the Belward Farm to be developed to a maximum of 4.6 million square feet, which is bigger than the Pentagon. The expectation is that by the end of the build out in 30 to 40 years, there would be up to 60,000 new workers in a half-mile circle of this Life Sciences City. County Executive Ike Leggett has suggested a modest reduction to 18 million square feet.

Your DCA Executive Board and the “Scale-it Back” [www.scale-it-back.com](http://www.scale-it-back.com) group have been petitioning the Council to reject the Planning Department’s ideas and contract the scope of the zoning changes. We are all concerned that the resulting traffic from 60,000 new workers will make commuting unbearable and destroy the quality of life for those living anywhere near this project. As a reference point, the entire county added 20 million square feet of new commercial space since 1989. So this takes two decades of growth and compresses into a very small box with no direct link to the Metro. Although it is hoped that the CCT (Corridor Cities Transitway) will be light rail and connect to Shady Grove Metro, and that the CCT will connect to the Life Sciences Center, this is not guaranteed at this point and the CCT is competing with many other transit projects, both in Maryland and across the country.

The Belward Farm is a separate issue unto itself. The new owner, Johns Hopkins University, appears to be

renegeing on the deal that brought them the farm for a very modest \$5 million. The nephew of Elizabeth Banks, the deceased owner, is considering litigating the development plans of JHU on the grounds that the sale agreement limits the site to 1.2 million square feet of campus style development. Many people recognize the historical significance of this 150-year-old farm and the influence the farm’s open space has the surrounding community.

Lastly, the County Council will have already voted on changes to the growth policy that have been proposed by the Planning department. These changes would consider allowing further degradation of the county’s infrastructure to allow for the desired expansion. An example is allowing for more traffic congestion such that in places in the average vehicle speed could be as low as 5 mph! This has created a public outcry at several levels.

For more information about this proposal and its opposition, please visit the [www.scale-it-back.com](http://www.scale-it-back.com) web site and become familiar with these issues and the people involved. Additional information can also be found on the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery County web site at [www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/gaithersburg/index.shtm](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/gaithersburg/index.shtm).

Contact Art Slesinger at [art.slesinger@comcast.net](mailto:art.slesinger@comcast.net) or Bob Thompson at [bob.thompson@comcast.net](mailto:bob.thompson@comcast.net).

## ***Utility Reliability Committee***

by Art Slesinger

The summer produced few power outages so perhaps the PEPCO efforts have been effective. On the landline phone front, the Public Service Commission staff has again worked out a proposed settlement with Verizon. This would resolve several complaint actions started by the PSC almost 3 years ago. It is similar to the previously rejected settlement in that it only encourages Verizon to provided better repair service. It requires no investment in the copper phone line system and as such does not resolve the underlying problem. The settlement would give you a small credit if Verizon has failed to restore service within 24 hours of their first attempted service. The credit is not enough to turn your head. Please file complaints about Verizon service with PSC on the Commissions web site and let the writer know of any service issues.

Contact Art Slesinger at [art.slesinger@comcast.net](mailto:art.slesinger@comcast.net).

## ***Those Who Serve...***

by Madeline Dalessio



US Air Force Captain Kevin Marmillion, son of Linda and Paul Marmillion, pilots C17s and has recently returned stateside from a deployment in the Middle East.

Ryan Bentley, son of Steve and Denise Hathaway, left for Marine Corps Boot Camp, Paris Island, SC on Monday, October 12th. While he is in boot camp for the next 13 weeks he is not allowed packages of any kind even during the holidays (and his 21st birthday).

Missy Bateman is assigned to the 169th Engineering Battalion - Echo Company stationed at Ft. Belvoir VA.

Lars Hinrichsen has been in the Air Force for a year and a half now after graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy in the summer of 2008. He was stationed at Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi for training. Lars initially flew the T-6 Texan to learn basic flight and then moved on to the advanced fighter trainer, the supersonic T-38 Talon. He just completed pilot training in October and is now an Air Force Pilot. Lars will be moving to Hurlburt Field on the Gulf Coast of Florida in January of 2010 and will be joining the Air Force Special Forces as an Air Commando flying the U-28. The U-28 is used to support American Special Forces, such as the Navy SEALs. His missions will take him all over the world in support of many operations, primarily the War on Terror.

1st Lieutenant Ryan Swisher has been promoted up to the Battalion level as the Assistant Operations Officer at the Tactical Operations Center at the Command Headquarters of the 1st-40th Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry in Afghanistan. He will be providing tactical control over the combat operations in his area of responsibility in eastern Afghanistan. He previously served as 1st Platoon leader, C Company.

Please consider sending a holiday card or package to "our troops." Wouldn't it be great if Darnestown's deployed sons and daughters got a big stack of cards from their hometown recognizing and appreciating their service to our country?

I will be sending a holiday package to Lt. Swisher who is still serving in Afghanistan. Those wanting to contribute to the package, please contact me for the details. If you prefer to send your own, the address is below. I have directions and a list of suggested items for the troops. Small cash contributions are also helpful. Holiday packages for those serving in a military theater should be shipped by December 10th.

Ryan Swisher  
1-40th Cav, 4/25 BCT  
TF Sparta  
FOB Gardez  
APO AE 09354

If you would like future columns to include your child, spouse or self, please contact Madeline D'Alessio at [dalessio@comcast.net](mailto:dalessio@comcast.net).

## ***Quince Orchard Library***

By Elizabeth Cookson

Adults, teens, tots, there are programs for all of you at the Library.

The teen area has been refurbished with attractive tables and chairs and there is still more to come. Teen programs are a regular feature.

Children even under 24 months can come to an entertaining morning of stories, songs and fingerplays on Tuesdays. The Discovery Room which is stocked with toys is open to toddlers and older. You need to book the room for the hour and it is yours to enjoy. Bigger kids in grades 4 -6 have a monthly book discussion with craft activity.

Adults are invited to join in a variety of book discussions including a Spanish/English book discussion, African American, Chinese, and Librarians Choice. Generally, the books are available at the Information Desk.

Practice reading and speaking English as a Second Language (ESL) at the ESL book discussion which meets once a month. Books are available at the Information Desk. There is also a regular English Conversation Club that meets most mornings. Please note that the Club will not meet when the schools are closed due to bad weather even though the library may be open.

Book sales are the first Saturday of the month. Volunteers are always welcome. We need our book sale money more than ever as the County is cutting back Library Services throughout the system, so please be patient with staff who have even more to do when there are cuts. There may also be a wait for popular books.

December 12 is the Library birthday party celebration marking the original opening date of the Library. Volunteers from the Friends and Advisory groups serve cake and punch to all who come in during the afternoon between noon and 4:30 p.m. When there is a special program, please check with the Library in case of cancellation.

You may like to note some of the books read by the Adult reading groups in November which were: Color Me Butterfly by L.Y. Marlow, Angel and Demons by Dan Brown, Todo Bjo el Cielo by M.I Asensi, Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell.

### *From Our Schools...*

#### **The Barnesville School**

by Nicole Campbell

The Barnesville School recently hosted The Lymphoma Research Ride. This is the third year the ride has been held at Barnesville and the event raised over \$380,000 towards Lymphoma research. Barnesville Parents and Alumni participated in the ride-it was a great success!

The school will also be participating in a Help the Homeless Walkathon. Every student and faculty member participates in this event, with proceeds going to The Dwelling Place.

Barnesville will also be hosting two Open Houses-one on December 11th, at 9:30 am and another on January 12th, at 9:30 am. We invite families interested to contact Susanne Johnson, [sjohnson@barnesvilleschool.org](mailto:sjohnson@barnesvilleschool.org), for more information about the school.

#### **Darnestown Elementary School**

by Kristen Crook

Thanks to everyone who took the time to write a letter to Dr. Weast regarding our potential school expansion. Dr. Weast approved the expansion plans for DES! Next step is a review by the Board of Education and public hearings in November. The Board of Education is scheduled to take final action on these items on November 19. Once approved by the Board, the proposal will be submitted to the Montgomery County Executive and the County Council for consideration. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

Darnestown just wrapped up a most unique and successful fundraiser for the PTA. Instead of the usual gift-wrap sales, our kids participated in a Read-A-Thon. With an incredible 91-percent participation rate, we raised \$18,500 (\$10,000 over our goal), which will fund many programs throughout the year. Thank you for your support and enthusiasm for this event.

International Night, held in October, was a huge success! Eighteen countries were represented, from Argentina to Zambia. The event was designed to introduce children to different cultures and customs. DES families presented informative booths of each country which included maps, flags, type of government, leaders' names, land size, population, language, monetary unit, art work, foods, and more. Thank you to the families who participated!



Katie Pohl demonstrates Irish dancing at DES's International Night held in October.

Lots of great events coming up:

Barnes and Noble Night:	December 9th
Winter Choral/Instrumental Concert:	January 19th
Bingo Night with staff raffle:	January 22
Science Expo:	February 22nd

Contact Kristen Crook by email at [kristencrook@msn.com](mailto:kristencrook@msn.com).

#### **Lakelands Park Middle School**

by Kathy O'Rourke

Lakeland's Park Middle School has been a very busy place this year. First and foremost we welcomed our

new principal, Ms. Deborah Higdon. She and the staff at LPMS spent the latter part of our summer working to make the school a welcome place for incoming 6th grade, new students and all returning students as well.

Ms. Higdon has implemented many new ideas at LPMS, one of which is weekly and quarterly communication with the parents. Each week, LPMS parents will receive a pre-recorded message from Ms. Higdon highlighting the events taking place at the school the following week. She has also started a quarterly newsletter noting all the activities going on in each grade's academic departments, as well as the PTSA updates.

The sports department has also been a very active place this fall. Both the boys and girls softball teams had a terrific turnout and both teams gave impressive efforts in their sports. They showed amazing sportsmanship and team spirit, representing LPMS very well. The Cross Country team excelled and met the demands of exceptional long distance runners. There were several Darnestown students on ALL of these teams. The athletes and their coaches should be commended on a job well done!

On October 15th LPMS welcomed author Jordon Sonneblick to the school to give a presentation on his work. He is an accomplished author of books for middle and high school students. Some of his work includes "Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie" and Notes from the Midnight Driver". It is always an inspiration to students to meet an author of a popular book.

Halloween was a hoot at LPMS! The kids wore costumes and celebrated with the Annual Fright Night Party at school, thanks to the PTSA. From 7 to 9 p.m., the kids danced and ate and enjoyed the night!

## **Mary of Nazareth**

### **Mary of Nazareth School Goes Green**

Alison Melley, Go Green Committee Chair

The Mary of Nazareth School community has recently made great strides towards "greening" our school. The HSA established a Go Green Committee, made up of parent volunteers and school staff, with the goal of becoming better stewards of our Earth. We started by recycling at our annual benefit auction in the Spring of 2008. Next, we adjusted our waste management system to handle more commingled materials. By Fall 2008, blue bins were in place in the lunchroom. Parents and teachers help children identify what goes where. A representative from Montgomery County recently conducted a recycling presentation at all scheduled lunches. Soon after, even

young students were reportedly checking up on teachers and parents to be sure things were going in the right places! We are now working with volunteers and teachers to increase recycling during school events, and we are collecting foil juice pouches for recycling through the Terracycle program.

While the recycling initiatives were getting started, an effort was underway to create an improved school web site. This site has enabled us to eliminate our previous system of delivering news to parents on paper. Every week, parents would receive a packet of news and flyers. Starting this Fall 2009, instead of photocopying an average of 2500 sheets of paper weekly, the office staff post the weekly news on the web site. This includes forms parents use to register for activities, hot lunch, aftercare, and more.

While parent volunteers have worked hard to help the school "go green," several teachers have begun their own initiatives, including working towards becoming a certified "Green School." Our preschool teacher, Mrs. Amy Ebner, routinely uses discarded CDs, yogurt cups, and other re-used materials in art projects. Our fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Robin Field, arranged for students to collect recycling from classrooms. Her initial goal was to recycle the many wipes containers utilized in the classroom, but this grew to collecting other commingled materials as well as paper. The middle school science teacher, Michele Kowansky, has begun several student-led projects such as composting and a native plant garden (utilizing our greenhouse). She is also researching options for replacing styrofoam lunch trays with a more eco-friendly product. Finally, the Student Government is considering projects such as recycling batteries and cell phones at school. Our hope is that our entire community will embrace the idea of becoming stewards of the earth, and recycling will become second nature!

### **When Nature Calls**

by Christine Priznar

Mary of Nazareth School's campus is centered on a former farm with adjacent woodlands. The students at the school have the opportunity to learn about nature first hand through participation in a special after school program, LAND. Landscape and Nature Discoveries, Inc. (LAND) works with about a dozen Mary of Nazareth School students. LAND offers clubs in the spring and the fall for students in K-6th grade.

When the club meets, there is plenty of excitement and enthusiasm wondering where that day's adventure will lead. Sometimes we walk the perimeter of the campus buildings discovering little creatures that live just outside the classroom: praying mantis, butterflies, frogs,



toads, snakes, a bird's nest with baby birds, etc. Any plant, animal or insect can be a topic for discussion and become another hands on learning experience.

We may discuss the weather during our walks, learning about high and low pressure systems or what's making it drizzle on us during our hike. We may walk through the woods and creek where there are endless discoveries that lead to lots of exciting learning. During one LAND session while walking through the pine forest, Jonah calls out, "We found a group of mice." He along with Bridget and Guy remember finding a mouse nest with the mama and the babies. Quite a bit of excitement ensued from the discussion about the mice.

LAND's program combined with the school's unique campus provide an ideal learning environment and may result in a student holding a lifetime focus upon stewarding the planet.

### **Ridgeview Middle School**

by Holly Parker, PTSA President

This has been a busy fall at Ridgeview Middle School! As always, our outstanding volunteer force has been hard at work with the many tasks needed to get the school year started and to support the thirty-five PTSA standing committees.

Ridgeview was honored to be presented with the Outstanding Volunteer Program Award at the MCPS Back-To-School Fair that was held in August. This award recognized the many hours and achievements of our superb volunteers at the school during the 2008/2009 year.

A successful Sally Foster sale and book fair were held in September and October. The money raised at these two events will fund PTSA programs for the year. We have also had three community restaurant nights. Ridgeview families have loved eating out, supporting local restaurants, and earning money for the school at the same time. Our business promotions committee has also been working very hard collecting box tops, printer cartridges, and plastic bags to raise money for the school.

There are several after-school programs that students are participating in this year, thanks to the dedication of parents who are running the programs. Ridgeview will be participating in the National Spelling Bee, Math Olympiad, and Destination Imagination. The Father's Group is also planning different activities to promote and increase the involvement of fathers in school activities.

Ridgeview has received a science grant from the National Science Foundation to enhance the science curriculum.

Students have been able to participate in trips to the Chesapeake Bay and in a Light Fantastic Assembly.

Ridgeview Bobcats are looking forward to many more great things at school this year!

To contact Holly Parker, email [cobbparker@aol.com](mailto:cobbparker@aol.com).

### **Seneca Academy/The Circle School**

by Brooke Carroll

It is with great anticipation and excitement that we announce that Seneca Academy is in a process of significant growth. We are fortunate to have a 26 year history of providing exceptional education in the Darnestown community and it is upon this strong foundation that we are building our future. After a summer of very hard work guided by Maggie Szymanek of Uncommon Consulting, a Strategic Planning committee of our Board of Trustees has produced a plan that will guide our growth over the next 3 years. This plan focuses on the key areas currently affecting Seneca Academy: enrollment, faculty and staff, the educational program, internal communications and marketing, buildings and grounds, and the resources we will need to protect what we have and support our future. Embedded in our plan is the integration of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Plan which we have already begun.

The evolution of our name is one change that impacts the community. We began as "The Circle School" and offered preschool and kindergarten. For 15 years, this name suited the school well. Under the direction of our founder Jodi Thurmond, elementary and middle school programs were added and we became known as Seneca Academy/The Circle School. Now with our growth and transition, we have decided that it is time to just be known by one name. As "Seneca Academy" we will continue the tradition of programs for which we have always been known.

What will not change is our commitment to providing excellent education in a nurturing and engaging environment. Through the strategic planning process we revisited our mission and vision. We believe they accurately represent who we are now as a school, and where we are going.

*Our mission is to provide a nurturing environment that meets the intellectual, social, emotional and physical needs of our students through engaging, challenging inquiry-based education. Our vision is to develop globally aware life-long learners and leaders.*



Seneca Academy/The Circle School is an International Baccalaureate Candidate School, and is in the process of becoming a fully authorized International Baccalaureate/Primary Years Program school. Through the IB/PYP, we will help students develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world.

We believe in *turning experience into knowledge* through...

- Nurturing students in small classes—indoors and outdoors
- Engaging students in developmentally appropriate active learning
- Challenging students to meet their personal best
- Encouraging self-confidence and independence
- Fostering responsibility and respect
- Developing effective communicators and problem-solvers

We are grateful for the support and involvement of the Darnestown community over the past 26 years. We will continue to be active members of the community and welcome families to our school. We invite all who are interested in learning more about our programs and growth to attend one of our upcoming Open Houses in early January and February. More information can be found on our website: [www.senecaacademy.org](http://www.senecaacademy.org).

## **Thomas Jefferson Preparatory**

by Susie Gooch and Michelle Wentz

OPEN HOUSE: Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

TJP is off to a great start for our third year here in Darnestown! TJP is now certified by the Maryland State Department of Education to offer 8th grade! This completes TJP's goal to offer all grades from 1st through 8th, thus giving the Darnestown community another middle school option. In addition, we were proud to welcome three new students to the TJP Family within the 1st month of school. Please visit our website at [www.tjprep.org](http://www.tjprep.org) for more information about TJP's various programs.

Our After School Clubs this year are open to all Darnestown students, not just TJPers! TJP is offering a beginning technology club for 1st - 3rd grade students and an advanced club for 4th - 8th grade students. The Club's teacher is Darnestown's own Lynn Gavey, who has been the technology teacher at Stone Ridge Academy for the past 8 years, and was a recent winner

of the Maryland Instructional Computer Coordinators Association's Multimedia Teacher's Contest.

TJP is also offering a French Club this year, which is also open to all Darnestown students. The Club's teacher is our own Mary Burton, who also happens to be a Darnestown resident. Mary lived in France and Switzerland for 2 years, so she speaks fluent French!

TJP's 3rd annual trip to Homestead Farm for pumpkin picking went off well in spite of a few sprinkles! As always, Farmer Ben Allnutt had the farm festively decorated for the season, and he made all of our students feel welcome and special. The students had a marvelous time on the hayrides, petting the animals, climbing in the huge hay pile, and picking the best and biggest pumpkins they could carry! Thanks for a really great day, Ben!

And speaking of fun, TJP's 2nd Annual Halloween Parade and Trick-or-Treat to Safeway took place without a hitch. Our students wore their best costumes to walk from the TJP campus at Fairhaven United Methodist Church to Safeway, where special treat stations had been set up all around the store for our trick-or-treaters! There is nothing quite like the mid-morning sight of 40 little ghosts and goblins walking along the sidewalks of Darnestown Road! We saw several neighbors in passing cars along the way – thank you all for honking and waving to our students! You made them feel very special indeed! We would also like to thank Safeway's store manager Caren Jones and all the gang at Safeway for making this annual event possible.

TJP's annual international trip this year will take place in June rather than at Spring Break. The trip is, as always, open to the Darnestown community. TJP's 2010 overseas trip is Germany and the Alps! Please feel free to email Mrs. Gooch at [wsgooch@comcast.net](mailto:wsgooch@comcast.net) for more information.

We'd like to thank neighbor Dave Dorozinsky for his donation of so many great classical CDs to our music department, and neighbor Pauline Irwin for her donation of so many different kinds of terrific coffees for our teachers! Neither Dave nor Pauline has a child here at TJP, so we were especially grateful for their neighborly donations.

If you haven't already done so, the TJP Family would be very grateful to if you would consider registering your Giant, Safeway, and Harris Teeter customer cards to TJP.

TJP's Giant Bonus Bucks ID - 05521  
TJP's Safeway e-Script ID - 500016439

TJP's Harris Teeter TIE ID - 6326

We're looking forward to seeing you on January 17th, or feel free to drop by at any time for a chat.

Contact Susie Gooch or Michelle Wentz at (301) 330-7550 or visit [www.tjprep.org](http://www.tjprep.org) for more information.

## ***St. Nicholas Episcopal Church***

by Reverend Ken Howard

### **St. Nick's Continues Growing Its Membership and Ministries**

St. Nicholas Episcopal Church launched its first full program year in its recently completed building on September 13 with its Kick-Off Sunday, inviting the neighborhood to check out its new "digs" at its 9:00am and 5:00pm Sunday service.

The church continued to reach out into the surrounding community on Sunday, October 4, with a Blessing of the Animals service in celebration of the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi. Over 150 "worshippers" were in attendance that day, including several dozen of God's more slippery, scaly, and furry creatures: salamanders, dragon lizards, cats, dogs, guinea pigs, and more. In addition, the church hosted a pet adoption, took up a special collection for the Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County, and collected winter coats for needy school children.

Now the church is setting its sights on Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany activities:

**Dec. 6 – St. Nicholas Day Celebration (9:00am & 5:00pm services).** The Church will hold special St. Nicholas Day festivities on Sunday, December 6, including a visit from Bp. Nicholas of Myra, himself.

**Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Services (5:00p.m., 7:00pm, and 9:00pm).**

- **5:00pm – Children's Service.** An informal, interactive service especially for young children.
- **7:00pm – Early Evening Service.** A festive service of song and celebration for those who desire a less formal atmosphere (suitable for families and individuals of all ages).
- **9:00pm – Late Evening Service.** A somewhat more traditional service, full of songs and stories of Christmas.

**Dec. 27 – Festival of Lessons and Carols.** A traditional Anglican service of lessons and carols.

Keep your eyes on St. Nicholas Church, as the Church Year goes on. We hope to add a third service (late morning) sometime this spring.

Contact Reverend Howard at [rector@saintnicks.com](mailto:rector@saintnicks.com)

## ***Gaithersburg Area Newcomers Club***

by Lynda Slesinger

### **Expand social connections and make new friends...**

The Gaithersburg Area Newcomers Club welcomes *new residents* and those in *life transition* (lifestyle changes, retirement, etc.). We offer an extensive variety of fun social activities. For more information or to receive a Newsletter, contact DCA Member, Lynda Slesinger, at 301-990-1067.

### ***Information for Newcomers***

If you are a new resident of Darnestown, welcome to our neighborhood! The information on this page should be helpful and will introduce you to some things that give Darnestown a sense of community.

The Darnestown Civic Association, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation originally formed in 1967, which represents the interests of Darnestown area residents in all matters pertaining to the welfare of Darnestown and its residents. The general purposes of the DCA are explained in its bylaws and Articles of Incorporation. Payment of annual dues (\$25 per individual or family) enables you to vote on issues during Town Meetings.

The fiscal year of the DCA is July 1 through June 30, and annual dues billing statements are mailed out at the end of June each year, although dues may be paid any time during a given year. Current officers of the DCA are listed on Page 2 of *The Little Acorn*.

#### ***Mailing Address:***

Darnestown Civic Association  
14100 Darnestown Road  
Darnestown, MD 20874

***Boundaries:*** Since Darnestown is not incorporated, it has no official boundaries. The activities and focus of the DCA include an area of some 12 square miles, centered approximately at the intersection of Maryland Routes 28 and 112 (Darnestown Road and Seneca Road). Maps are available at Town Meetings.

***The Little Acorn*** newsletter is published quarterly, in March, June, September and December. Its name derives from its origin as a tiny newsletter in the Ancient Oak subdivision more than 20 years ago. Now it is mailed (3rd class) to every residential address that we have in



our DCA data base. Volunteers, based on information from membership remittance form and our Welcome Committee, maintain this name and address file. The newsletter should arrive in your mailbox early in each of the above months. If you don't receive an issue, please contact the editor or any DCA officer. Publication of *The Little Acorn* is entirely a volunteer effort except for the printing and mailing.

**Town Meetings** are held quarterly by the DCA, usually on the 2nd or 3rd Thursday of March, June, September and December in the Fellowship Hall of the Darnestown Presbyterian Church at the intersection of Route 28 and Turkey Foot Road. Meetings are scheduled for 7:30 p.m., but are not called to order until 7:45 to allow some time for meeting neighbors, etc. Each issue of *The Little Acorn* features an announcement about the upcoming Town Meeting.

Annual Meeting and Election of DCA Officers coincide with the Town Meeting in June. Nominations are announced in June edition of *The Little Acorn* in advance of the Annual Meeting in accordance with the bylaws of the GDCA.

**Telephone Directory:** Every two years, the DCA publishes a directory of residents' names, addresses and phone numbers and mails it to every residential address in our database. To obtain a copy of the Directory, call Sarah Scherer at 240-683-8533 or sarahscherer@comcast.net. They are only available while supplies last.

**Organizations, Clubs, Groups, PTAs, etc.,** provide much of the social interaction that give any area a sense of community. Below are many of Darnestown's:

***Barnesville School***

21830 Peach Tree Road  
Barnesville, MD 20838  
301-972-0341  
Jaralyn Hough, Head of School

***Boy Scout Troop 1094***

Scoutmaster Bud Wildman (301-990-8318)

***Brownies and Junior Girl Scouts***

Cathy Sharpe (301-519-9520)

***Butler School***

15951 Germantown Road  
Beckie Hardie, Academic Head (301-977-6600)

***Circle School/Seneca Academy***

15601 Germantown Road  
Darnestown, MD 20874  
Brooke Carroll, Head of School (301-869-3728)

***Darne Bloomers Garden Club***

Sandy Hribar, President  
Betsy Kingman, Membership (301-921-1988)

***Darnestown Civic Association***

14100 Darnestown Road, Darnestown, MD 20874  
Lisa Patterson-Troike, President (301-548-0999)

***Darnestown Elementary School***

15030 Turkey Foot Road, Darnestown, MD 20878  
Laura Colgary, Principal (301-840-7157)

***Darnestown Swim and Racquet Club***

P. O. Box 3574, Darnestown, MD 20885  
Jeannie Tucker, Membership (Jeannietucker@aol.com)

***Friends of the Library-Quince Orchard Chapter***

Membership, Elizabeth Cookson  
301-869-6326

***Jones Lane Elementary School***

15110 Jones Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
Carole Sample, Principal  
301-840-8160

***Kehilat Shalom***

9915 Apple Ridge Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20886  
301-869-7699

***Lakelands Park Middle School***

1200 Main Street, Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
Jerome Lynch, Principal  
301-670-1400

***Mary of Nazareth School***

14131 Seneca Road, Darnestown, MD 20874  
Michael J. Friel, Principal  
301-869-0940

***Quince Orchard Community Library***

Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
240-777-0200

***Northwest High School***

12501 Richter Farm Road, Germantown, MD 20874  
Sylvia Morrison, Principal  
301-601-4660

***Quince Orchard High School***

15800 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
Ms. Carole Working, Principal  
301-840-4686

***Ridgeview Middle School***

16600 Raven Rock Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
Dr. Carol Levine, Principal  
301-840-4770



**Thomas Jefferson Preparatory**

12801 Darnestown Road, Darnestown, MD 20878  
Susie Gooch, Head of School  
301-330-7550

**Trout Unlimited**

Seneca Valley Chapter, #369  
website: <http://senecavalleytu.org/>  
Charles August (csaugust@comcast.net), Secretary  
240-401-8669

**Places of Worship**

Additions to the places of worship listed here are most welcome. Please send relevant contact information to [acorneditor@comcast.net](mailto:acorneditor@comcast.net).

If your not-for-profit organization is hosting an event open to the public, and you'd like help getting the word out, send a paragraph with the relevant details to [acorneditor@comcast.net](mailto:acorneditor@comcast.net) before deadline, and we'll be glad to include it in the next issue of *The Little Acorn*.

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints**

Kentlands Ward, 16 Kent Gardens Circle  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878  
301-972-4638  
240-631-0796

**Darnestown Presbyterian Church**

Rt. 28 & Turkey Foot Road, Darnestown, MD 20878  
301-948-9127  
[www.darnestownpc.org](http://www.darnestownpc.org)

**Dawsonville Mennonite Church**

16500 Whites Ferry Road, Poolesville, Maryland  
301-874-8672

**Fairhaven United Methodist Church**

12801 Darnestown Road, Darnestown, MD 20878  
301-330-5433

**First Church of Christ, Scientist**

300 E Diamond Avenue, Gaithersburg, Md. 20877  
301-977-6544

**Gaithersburg Chinese Alliance Church**

13101 Darnestown Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-869-8343  
[www.gcacmd.org](http://www.gcacmd.org)

**Germantown Baptist Church**

1740 Riffle Ford Road, Germantown, MD 20874  
301-428-3622  
[www.germantownbaptist.org](http://www.germantownbaptist.org)

**Kehilat Shalom**

9915 Apple Ridge Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20886  
301-869-7699  
[mail@KehilatShalom.org](mailto:mail@KehilatShalom.org)  
[www.KehilatShalom.org](http://www.KehilatShalom.org)

**Or Chadash**

4800 Kings Valley Road, Damascus MD 20872  
301-482-1025

**Our Lady of the Visitation Parish**

14139 Seneca Road, Darnestown, MD 20874  
301-948-5536  
[www.olvp.org](http://www.olvp.org)

**Poplar Grove Baptist Church**

14625 Jones Lane, North Potomac, MD 20878  
301-330-5054  
[www.poplargrovebaptistchurch.org](http://www.poplargrovebaptistchurch.org)

**Prince of Peace Lutheran Church**

11900 Darnestown Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-869-3666  
[www.poplutheran.org](http://www.poplutheran.org)

**St. Nicholas Episcopal Church**

15575 Germantown Road, Darnestown, MD 20874  
240-631-2800  
[office@saintnicks.com](mailto:office@saintnicks.com)  
[www.saintnicks.com](http://www.saintnicks.com)

**Seneca Community Church**

13900 Berryville Road, Germantown, MD 20874  
301-869-9326

**Shaare Torah**

1409 Main Street, Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
301-869-9842

**Sugarloaf Congregation of Unitarian Universalists**

16913 Germantown Road  
Germantown, MD 20874-3013  
301-540-0575  
[www.scuu.org](http://www.scuu.org)

**Temple Beth Ami**

14330 Travilah Road, Rockville, MD 20852  
301-340-6818  
[www.bethami.org](http://www.bethami.org)

**The Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockville**

100 Welsh Park Drive  
Rockville, MD 20850  
301-762-7666; [www.uucr.org](http://www.uucr.org)



That inevitable holiday embarrassment that happens every year... Someone catches you off-guard with an unexpected gift and suddenly you're stuck uttering those dreaded words...

## "Gee... I didn't get you anything."

Save that egg on your face for an omelet. Wrap up a few cookbooks with generic paper and blank gift tags, and stash them with a pen in your closet, car, or office so that you can avoid that awkward situation. After the holidays, repurpose any leftovers as hostess or birthday gifts.

## Fast and fabulous nibblers to serve your holiday crowd (from Darne-Good, of course)

### Smothered Brie

*A tasty combination—vegetables, brie and French bread.*

5 marinated artichoke hearts, chopped  
5 green onions, chopped  
1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Garlic to taste  
2 wedges brie cheese  
French bread, sliced

1. Mix artichoke hearts, onions, mushrooms and seasonings and set aside.
2. Place wedges of brie in a pie dish and cover with mixture.
3. Bake for 20 minutes or until hot and soft.
4. Serve with slides of French bread.

**Temperature:** 350 degrees  
**Patty Peck**

**Time:** 20 minutes  
**Yield:** 10-12 servings

### Sausage Puffs

*Prepare ahead for last minute baking and easy entertaining.*

1 (17 ¼-ounce) box frozen puff pastry (contains 2 unbaked sheets)  
½ pound hot sausage  
½ pound sweet sausage  
½ cup grated Swiss cheese  
1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley  
1 teaspoon basil  
1 egg  
1 teaspoon summer savory

#### Dip

½ cup Dijon mustard  
¼ cup honey  
1 teaspoon crushed tarragon

1. Thaw both sheets of puff pastry and set aside.
2. Combine next eight ingredients in a mixing bowl and mix well.
3. Roll each puff pastry into a 11x17-inch rectangle. Cutting lengthwise, cut each rectangle into three pieces.
4. Take approximately 1/6 of sausage mixture and roll into a rope, the same length as the pastry rectangles.
5. Place each sausage roll into a pastry rectangle and roll jelly roll style, pinching seams to seal.
6. Place rolls on a baking sheet and freeze for 1 ½ hours.
7. Remove from freezer and cut into 1-inch pieces.
8. Bake for 30 minutes.
9. Serve with dip.

*Must prepare ahead.*

*Hint: Place frozen sausage puffs in freezer container for future use.*

**Temperature:** 375 degrees  
**Patty Peck**

**Time:** 30 minutes  
**Yield:** 8-10 servings

## Purchase a Darne-Good Cookbook today...

Darne-Good recipes are contributed by your neighbors... real people with busy lives who cook with staples from their fridge and pantry, just like you.

These are tried-and-true recipes worth sharing.

Still just \$15 each (only \$14 when ordering 6 or more) and FREE DELIVERY anywhere in Darnestown... right to your door!

To order your copies and arrange payment and delivery, call Carolyn Thompson (240-683-0103) or email [acorneditor@comcast.net](mailto:acorneditor@comcast.net).

Please make checks payable to Darnestown Civic Association



## *Dennis Rippeon*

Dennis Rippeon passed away on Wednesday, November 4, 2009. He was 62. He is survived by his wife, Priscilla, his sons, Brandon and Benjamin, Ben's wife Nicolle, his father, Orman, and his brother, David.

Dennis and Priscilla moved to Darnestown 33 years ago, and Dennis held positions on the Executive Board of the Civic Association for the past 20 years. As an active member of the Darnestown Village Committee for all those years, he brought to the table his skills as a successful businessman during negotiations with property owners and developers as Darnestown evolved. His participation and insight were especially helpful as the association sought to balance the rights and wishes of residents and developers, and to shape the future of the village center.

His professional career centered on the operation and success of auto dealerships, most recently as Chief Operating Officer of the Ourisman Automative Group, but he was also skilled in all aspects of home construction and remodeling. As a friend and neighbor, Dennis was always helping others with their home projects. He was a perfectionist in everything, and all the projects he did in his own houses and for other people exhibit that perfection. As husband and father, Dennis' devotion to his family was inspirational to all who knew him.

Contributions may be made in memory of Dennis O. Rippeon to University of Maryland Scholarship Fund, in care of UMCP Foundation, Office of Gift Acceptance, 4511 Knox Road, Suite 205, College Park, MD, 20742.

\* \* \* \* \*



*May this holiday season bring  
the warmth of home and hearth, the cheer and good will of friends,  
the hope of a child-like heart.*



