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Issue #442

GPCA Newsletter

December 2024



Happy Holidays!

From the GPCA Board



GPCA General Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2024, 7:00 pm



Social Hall, Granite Presbyterian Church
10637 Old Court Road

GPCA Holiday Party

T'is the Season! Join us for a celebration of the holidays - Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa- all happening at the same time this year! We will share libations, finger foods and goodies, the great company of friends and neighbors, and very special live music. We are being treated to the joy of Dominique Johnson, Devine Sounds, on his saxophone. You just can't miss this wonderful way to gift wrap our calendar year.

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Upcoming Meetings:

January 13, 2025 – Elections

February 10 – To be announced

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Inside This Issue

(click on the link to go to article)

Articles

[President's Note](#)

[Last Meeting](#)

[GPCA Elections](#)

[Interim BC Executive](#)

[Residential Burglary Tips](#)

[DNR MD State Parks](#)

[GPCA Community Sign](#)

[Campground Zoning Proposal](#)

[Granite Historical Society](#)

[MD Water Monitoring](#)

[Conference](#)

[Maryland Bats](#)

Inside This Issue

(click on the link to go to article)

[Around the Neighborhood](#)

Announcements

GPC Live Nativity

Festival of Lessons & Carols

[Classifieds](#)

Chesapeake Tree Services

Warm Spirit Massage

David Dell Tree Services

Lenny's Automotive



President's Note



Fellow Members, Friends and Neighbors,

Yes! Truly t'is the Season, not just for parties, but for the genuine celebration of really good, collective community strength, accomplishment, and each other. And no, we have not always prevailed, but we are seen, heard and respected, no matter how tough the opposition. We can look back on 2024 as a year of engagement – CZMP, Baltimore County administration departments, law enforcement, Liberty Road Volunteer Fire Co., MD Wing Civil Air Patrol, Job Corps, and more. This is how we stay informed and address the larger community concerns of our members and neighbors to gain consensus. We have 38 years under our belts, and we are very good at it. (2 thumbs up!)

We may be small, but we are mighty!

~ Kathy Skullney, GPCA President

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ksskullney@verizon.net

[\(back to top\)](#)

Last Month's Meeting
November 11, 2024
Local Business Night
Featuring 5 Businesses We All Need to Know About!

For our November meeting, we were joined by diverse and great small businesses in the GPCA area. We learned about the construction of specialized and attached, outside accessory structures and ground enhancements by Lithic Landscapes, LLC's (lithiclandscapes.com) founder and owner, Ezra Link. Izzy Powell of Powell Creative, LLC (powellcreativellc.com) shared her beautiful, professional photography of people, pets, landscapes and more. We all sampled delicious treats made by Diana Cardillo from her well established wholesale bakeshop, Home Baked Goods by Diana, LLC (homebaked-goods.com). Jamie Condon Playtime Pastures, LLC (<http://playtimepastures.com>) shared a great power point showing the remarkable horse training, riding and farming activities on the Hernwood Road farm – including turkeys! And finally Lenny's Automotive, LLC extensive auto repair services presented by Lenny Goldberg, who makes it all happen. Check them all out on Facebook as well.

~ Kathy Skullney

[\(back to top\)](#)

ELECTION

January 13, 2025
Election of Officers
and Directors

It's that time again. GPCA By-Laws direct us to hold annual elections at our January general meeting. To be eligible to serve on the Executive Board candidates must be members of GPCA for a minimum of 6 months immediately preceding the election.

Officers are elected for a one year term. The president may serve for 2 consecutive one year terms and may again become eligible after a one year lapse. Directors serve for 3 year terms and can again become eligible after a one year lapse.

2025 Nominations for Officers and Directors

President – Vacant (this could be YOU)

Vice President – Butch Oakman

Secretary – Vacant (or this could be YOU)

Treasurer – Cathy Wolfson

Director – Gabriela Summerer, 3 year term expires January 2028

Note: Directors Ralph Wright and Chris Brock's terms expire January 2026 and 2027 respectively and their positions are not eligible for nominations.

Nominations of candidates are being taken at this time and will continue until the election when nominations will be taken from the floor (even the virtual floor).

All Officers and Directors shall contribute impartially to decisions of the board and support the objectives of GPCA which per our By-Laws are:

“To preserve and enhance the tranquility and beauty of our rural environment and to encourage orderly and positive growth of the community within the framework of prescribed regulations and laws. The Association shall provide a forum for all residents to express their concerns and interests and shall attempt to provide informative and interesting programs that will keep members informed and better able to address any of their concerns or problems. The Association's objective is also to foster a spirit of community among the residents.”

What's the commitment? In addition to attending GPCA's General Meetings on the 2nd Monday of September to June the Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm via Zoom. Not ready to serve on our Board but want to be involved? Consider serving on the Nominating Committee, we need 2 volunteers! If you're interested in serving on the Board, would like to nominate a candidate or have any questions about the process please contact me, Cathy Wolfson, Nominating Committee Chair at 410-245-8708 or oakknob@comcast.net.

~ Cathy Wolfson

([back to top](#))

Interim Baltimore County Executive

The Baltimore County Council will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the County Council Chamber (400

Washington Avenue, Towson, MD 21204) to discuss the qualifications for the next County Executive.

This hearing comes as we prepare for the anticipated vacancy in the County Executive's office following County Executive John A. Olszewski, Jr.'s election to Maryland's Second Congressional District. Twelve candidates have applied for the position, and the Council will elect the next County Executive in accordance with the Baltimore County Charter.

This is your opportunity to share your voice! The hearing is an open forum to provide general input on what qualifications you feel are most important for this role. Written public comments are also welcome via email at countycouncil@baltimorecountymd.gov through the date of the hearing.

Candidates: Jim Brochin, Jon S. Cardin, Yara A. Cheikh, Gregory A. Dennis, Paul Drutz-Hannahs, Tara E. Ebersole, William M. Huhn, Katherine A. Klausmeier, Aris Melissaratos, George Perdikakis, Sr., Tom Quirk, Barry F. Williams

~ Kathy Skullney

[\(back to top\)](#)



Residential Burglary Tips From Woodlawn Precinct



Community Resources Team Crime Prevention Alert

12-01

Residential Burglary Prevention

Residential burglary is one of the most frequently reported crimes. It is also one of the most preventable. Locking your windows and doors, installing high security locks, and establishing good security lighting, are the easiest and most cost-effective ways to prevent burglary.

Here are several additional recommendations that will assist you in making your home a less attractive target to a criminal:

- Sliding glass doors tend to be an easy point of entry. Special locks and bars are available to prevent the lifting and prying of the active door.
- All exterior doors should be equipped with a deadbolt lock. If the door is equipped with a window which is less than 40" away from the lock, a double-cylinder deadbolt lock is recommended.
- Landscaping should be trimmed so criminals cannot use it for concealment.
- Arrange landscaping/plants to allow for "natural surveillance" of your property. Avoid blocking windows and entrance doors from the view of pedestrians, motorists, and police.
- Illuminate the exterior of the home at night. Position lights to avoid glare, shadows, and blind spots. Consider motion sensor (demand lighting, timers) or photo sensor lights.
- The door frame is often referred to as the door jamb, and it is inherently weak. In most cases the frame is the weakest component of the door assembly. Adequately anchor the strike plate to the framing of the house by using 3" long screws.
- Exterior doors that open outward, have exposed hinges. Doors can be removed by removing the hinge pins. "Pinning" can be accomplished by removing two screws opposite each other, and installing pins in place of the screws. This will prevent the door from being removed.
- Security surveys are a "no cost" service to all Baltimore County residents and business owners. Community Outreach Team officers will examine areas of security, and place special emphasis on the application of **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** strategies.

Any questions or concerns about this document should be directed to the Baltimore County Police Department's Community Resources Team, Detective Carl Lindhorst @ 410-867-5901.

~ Officer Makowiecki

[\(back to top\)](#)

Department of Natural Resources Notices Kick Off the New Year Outdoors with Maryland State Parks



Maryland State Parks will be offering First Weekend hike opportunities across the state from December 31, 2024 - January 2, 2025. First Day Hikes are part

of a nationwide initiative led by America's State Parks that encourages all 50 states to offer outdoor hiking opportunities on the first day of the new year! Join us for a hike at a Maryland State Park or other public land near you. Check our website throughout December for the list of First Day Hikes; new hikes will be added as they are scheduled.

Local Hunting Season:

Maryland's two-week firearms hunting season for sika and white-tailed deer opens Saturday, Nov. 30 and runs through Saturday, Dec. 14. Check out DNR website for particulars.

[\(back to top\)](#)



GPCA Community Sign Design Complete!

Good News! After a number of iterations with the Fast Signs organization, we have completed the final design for the community sign (shown to left). In addition to what you see here, there will also be a 'rider panel', as they call it, hanging from the bottom which will allow us to communicate our upcoming activities, such as monthly meetings, community picnic, community clean-up, etc. Once we give the go-ahead we anticipate it will take approximately 2-4 weeks to complete the fabrication. So stay tuned and feel free to pass along any comments you may have to editorgpcanewsletter@gmail.com.

~Bill Skullney

[\(back to top\)](#)



Proposed Camping Facility on Kratz Property at 9043 Old Court Road

The owners of this 22 acre parcel, which sits behind the five residential properties along the small shared access road (across from Pollyhill), have

filed a Petition for Special Exception to establish a camping site. The plan shows 16 RV “pads and 3 areas for tents, built in four phases. The plan also includes multiple support facilities such as outhouses, main bath center, kitchen and waste collection. The hearing has been set for December 18th, but the adjoining residents have requested a postponement to better prepare. GPCA has supported this request for postponement of the hearing. There is no decision as of yet.

~ **Kathy Skullney**

[\(back to top\)](#)



Granite Historical Society

On Sunday December 22nd from 12:00-4:00 pm, the Granite Historical Society will be sponsoring its second house tour. This tour will feature the 'Granite Schoolhouse' located on Old Court Road at the intersection with St. Paul Avenue. Parking is available onsite as well as across the street behind the IOOF Lodge. Happy holidays and we hope to see you there!

~ **Bill Skullney**

GHS Vice President

[\(back to top\)](#)



The 2024 Maryland Water Monitoring Conference (MWMC) **– What is in it for us in Granite Maryland?**

Each year several members of our GPCA / Small Watershed Conservation Committee (SWCC) take a day off to attend the MWMC event with the goal of learning. We see it as our responsibility to apply what we learn to our local watershed survey and analysis efforts. This year Laurie Donnelly, Robert Reisdorf, Robert Teller, and Andy Grosko attended (Judy Plaskowitz planned to attend but had to pass). Here are a few of the things we learned from the professional state agencies that presented sessions and from the impressive assembly of student poster board presentations, Federal EPA plenary speakers and fellow citizen environmental conservationists. More details will follow about particular lessons learned in future GPCA / SWCC articles.

Morning started with an opportunity to grab a coffee and pastry and peruse exhibitor sponsor displays and student poster boards. The student poster boards caught my attention – they were outstanding examples of local research completed by either mentored high school students or college undergraduates. The researcher(s) explained the essence of their research and findings. I found it inspiring that these beginning scientists were so well-spoken as they described their findings. The mentorship program for high schoolers originated in Howard County schools. I wonder whether Baltimore County will offer a similar environmental mentorship program for our Granite youth.

Two plenary speakers opened this year's 30th annual MWM conference – one, Rich Batiuk, retired with 33 years of experience managing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA's) Chesapeake Bay Program office. The other, Bob Shedlock, an original board member of the MWM Council and retired director of the USGS (U. S. Geological Survey) Water Science Center. Both had similar themes in their presentations. Know your audience of clients, tailor your presentations, talks and interviews to CONNECT with them and their concerns. Local grassroots efforts can turn into something big long-term. Mr. Shedlock went on to explain how Maryland built off a National Water Monitoring prototype to become one of the first individual states to develop a state-level Water Monitoring Council. As the GPCA/SWCC team we try to apply the CONNECT theme to our undertakings by reporting findings back through the GPCA meetings, the GPCA newsletter and listening to our audience's concerns.

Throughout the day over 50 concurrent sessions of environmental topics were offered; our group of 4 split up and gravitated to topics most in-line with our individual interests. There were a wide array of session topics. I attended topics on seasonal variability of benthic macroinvertebrates assemblages as our years of surveying Granite area streams also showed seasonal patterns. Others focused on Ensuring Data Quality and Integrity in Environmental monitoring or Microbial Contaminations in Watersheds as our SWCC team members conduct monthly collections in these areas.

In addition to formal presentations, we make new contacts and learn from fellow attendees. In the buffet lunch line I met a Maryland DNR official who specializes in salt intrusion into our freshwater ground system. I mentioned

a problem we see in Dogwood Run with high salinity that appears to be coming from a particular tributary. With the DNR contact in hand, the SWCC team will now have a connection to help us discover what the source may be. At the lunch table, a group of 5 citizen science volunteers (including a SWCC representative) met with DNR officials to form a workgroup focused on better integrating Citizen data. Likely the first result will be better training using existing systems.

So now you have one perspective on the MWMC and how it may help us in Granite Maryland. In future SWCC articles you may hear other perspectives from our attendees as well as such exciting (to me) articles on how the Stonecat (a fish species in need of protection in Maryland) has been limited to a small fraction of its original range within Maryland.

~ **Andy Grosko**
SWCC Team Member

[\(back to top\)](#)



Maryland Bats



Bats provide enormous value to our ecosystems, but because they do their work under the cover of darkness, we aren't always aware of the help they give. These nocturnal creatures are unique in their ability to navigate through the darkness and locate insects using echolocation. They provide natural protection of crops from insects, allowing farmers to use fewer pesticides and saving agriculture billions of dollars per year. In Maryland, all of our bat species eat insects such as mosquitos, stinkbugs, moths, Spotted Lanternflies, and more.

Unfortunately, bat populations have been in decline for decades due to loss of habitat, pesticide use, the white-nose syndrome, and cats.

You may not see them often since, being nocturnal, they are most active after sundown. You may glimpse their dark shapes flying overhead at dusk, but you can also detect them with an attachment to your phone, called an Echo Meter. The Echo Meter is a device that attaches to an Android or iOS device, allowing you to hear ultrasonic bat calls and identify the bat species.

Bats will naturally roost in trees and wood piles. Little brown bats emerge from their dark roosts two-to-three hours after dusk to feed, then return to their roosts to sleep out the rest of the night and day hanging upside down. You may not see many in the winter, since most bats that roost in trees migrate south for winter when insects become scarce.

To invite bats to your yard, you can provide a natural habitat or buy or make a bat house.

A natural habitat should include water and native plants that either stay open through the night or bloom through the evening (attracting insects at night), such as evening primrose, foamflower, and garden phlox. Avoid using chemicals that kill insects. Keep dead trees (if safe to do so) and wood piles, as they attract insects.



A bat house can be mounted on a tree or pole in your yard but be sure to follow these guidelines for placement. The box should receive at least 6-7 hours of direct sun and should be oriented southeast or southwest. It should be within ¼ mile of water (stream, river or lake) with a mixture of different habitats (forest, agriculture), 20-25 feet from the nearest trees, and mounted 10-15 feet off the ground.

To find out more about bats visit [Guide to Maryland's Bats](#).

~ Laurie Donnelly
SWCC Team Member

[\(back to top\)](#)

Around the Neighborhood

Granite Historical Society House Tour – December 22nd, 12:00-4:00 pm, The 'Granite Schoolhouse', 10612 Old Court Road

Job Corps – (Community members welcome!)

Work Force Industry Advisory Board meeting – December 10th, 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Community Relations Council Meeting – February 11th, 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Randallstown NAACP – New officers installed! (See randnaacp.org for latest updates)

Woodlawn Police, Woodlawn Precinct – keep up with what's

happening:

<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/police/community/precincts/2-woodlawn>

What's happening in your HOA? What's going on around the neighborhood, along the roads or near you?

Let your community know!



Live Nativity
Friday, December 20
7:00 pm

Granite Presbyterian Church and Mount Paran Presbyterian Church will present a Live Nativity at 7:00 pm with hospitality in the Social Hall after the show. The show will feature live animals, songs and the beloved story of the first Christmas.

"A Real Christmas Treat!"

Please join us on the 20th at the Granite Presbyterian Church
10637 Old Court Road, Granite, MD 21163



[\(back to top\)](#)

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