



The Queen Anne's Chronicle

CELEBRATING QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

INFORMING THE CITIZENS



QAC Summer Skyscape

Photo Credit – David Godfrey

THE RAIN OF QUEEN ANNE'S

Question: How much rain do we get each year in Queen Anne's County?

Answer: Apparently rainfall here averages somewhere around 44 inches in a year.

Further Question: Why would the *Chronicle* give a vague, off-the-mark answer, when you could have just gone to the website of the National Water and Climate Center (NWCC) of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation

Service (www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/) and reported their answer: 42.54 inches?

Further Answer: Let's talk about it.

Annual Rainfall in QAC

That NWCC number is based on data from a station in Centreville from 1961 to 1985 – nothing later than that. When we went to the Maryland State Climatologist Office, we were told that they could find

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QAC SCHOOLS – WHAT WE GET FOR THE DOLLARS WE SPEND

What we spend on our QAC schools is the biggest single item in the County's budget – and, in a sense, the most misunderstood. Now some new research from two quarters -- Salisbury University's Perdue School of Business and the Center for American Progress in Washington DC -- sheds further light on what County taxpayers get in return for their investment in public education.

Before describing this research, let's have a quick look at some of the basic economic facts about our school system.

School Costs and (Some) Benefits

Most of us are aware that about \$44 million of the County's total budget of about \$107 million goes for our schools, supplemented by another \$30-plus million from the State.

Further, parents of school children (and readers of the *Chronicle*: see our Nov./Dec. 2011 issue) know that these expenditures are buying a high-quality educational product: QAC's is one of the top school systems in a State recognized as having the best public school system in the nation.

But one could still ask, are we perhaps

over-paying for this product, high-quality though it may be?

A Best Buy

Research from the Center for American Progress in Washington DC, indicates that the answer to that question is: QAC education is clearly a best-buy.

In a January 2011 report (*Return on Educational Investment: A District-by-District Evaluation of U.S. Educational Productivity*), the Center gives Queen Anne's County its top rating on basic return on educational investment. That rating results from the fact that **QAC schools are in the highest tier in the State in achievement, while at the same time they are in the lowest State tier in per-student spending.**

Expenditures by QAC taxpayers are efficiently providing the benefit of a top-flight K-12 education to County families with children in the public schools. (The Census tells us that in 2010 there were 5,573 QAC families with children under 18.) But is the benefit to these families the full extent of the

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QAC AND ITS NEIGHBORS: FACTS AND FIGURES

Percent Population Increase, 2000-2010:

QAC = 17.8% Talbot = 11.7% Kent = 5.2% Caroline = 11.1% MD = 9.0%

Percent Population 65 Years and Older, 2010:

QAC = 14.9% Talbot = 23.7% Kent = 21.8% Caroline = 13.3% MD = 12.3%

Unemployment Rate, April 2012:

QAC = 6.3% Talbot = 7.2% Kent = 7.1% Caroline = 8.2% MD = 6.5%

Persons per Square Mile, 2010:

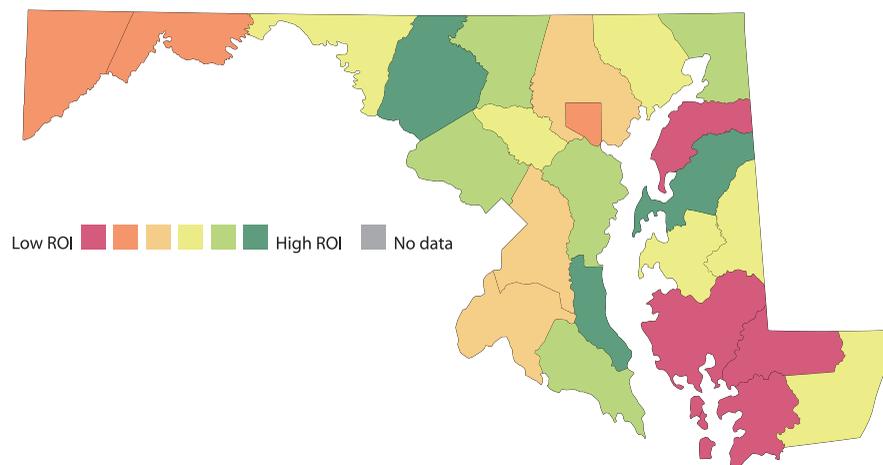
QAC = 128.5 Talbot = 140.7 Kent = 72.9 Caroline = 103.5 MD = 594.8

Sources: US Census, State and County QuickFacts; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment

ROI Evaluation Matrix

	Lowest achievement	Medium achievement	Highest achievement
Lowest cost			
Medium cost			
Highest cost			

Basic Return on Investment index rating: “This measure rates school districts on how much academic achievement they get for each dollar spent, relative to other districts in their state. To avoid penalizing districts where education costs are higher, we adjusted for a variety of factors including cost-of-living differences as well as higher concentrations of low-income, non-English-speaking, and special education students.” *Center for American Progress, Return on Educational Investment, p.7.*



School District	Basic ROI	State Achievement Index	Adj. Per Pupil Spending	Percent Low Income	Enrollment	Urbanicity
Queen Anne’s County Public Schools		87	\$8,648	15%	7,808	Rural: Distant
Caroline County Public Schools		81	\$9,245	44%	5,658	Rural: Distant
Dorchester County Public Schools		72	\$10,462	50%	4,654	Rural: Distant
Kent County Public Schools		76	\$11,614	39%	2,274	Rural: Distant
Talbot County Public Schools		83	\$10,093	24%	4,396	Town: Distant

QAC Schools, *continued from Page 1*

benefits of the \$44 million we are spending?

Here’s where the Salisbury University research is helpful, because it illuminates the full range of the economic benefits of County spending on education – benefits not limited, as we will see, to the population of school families.

Three Types of Benefits

The Salisbury research was carried out by BEACON, the Business, Economic and Community Outreach Network of the Perdue School of Business. It was done for ESMEC, the Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium and published in late 2011 as an *Economic Impact Analysis of the Publicly Funded Pre-K-12 Education on the Eastern Shore of Maryland*.

The research investigates three major categories of economic benefits from educational expenditures (denominated Types 1, 2 and 3) and, for each of the nine Eastern Shore counties, assesses the impacts on these benefits of changes in levels of school expenditures.

Type 1 – Benefits to school users:

Type 1 benefits are the obvious ones, such as the income boost that school graduates enjoy as their level and quality of education improves. Here the study found that on the Eastern Shore an increase (or decrease) in spending on schools of 2% translates into an average lifetime earnings increase (or decrease) of 1%. This quantifies something we all understand intuitively – that “education is the way to get ahead” -- and it gives us one way to think about the consequences for students of cutting X dollars from the schools budget.

Type 2 – Benefits beyond those to school users:

Perhaps more interesting are the Type 2 benefits, because these are the ones that go beyond the users of the school system and thus are often overlooked by those who do not have children in the schools. These benefits result from the expenditures on schools churning through the local economy in the form of teacher/staff payrolls, sales

by private sector vendors to the school system, additional jobs created, additional taxes paid – in the words of the report, “the various induced economic, employment, and fiscal impacts”.

The Salisbury researchers put the total Type 2 benefits from Queen Anne’s County schools at \$121 million for 2011 and summarized:

“The return on investment for the county’s investment (the total economic impact compared to local funding) was approximately 118%. This means that for every \$1.00 spent and retained in the county from the public school systems operating budget there is an additional \$1.18 of spending in the county.”

“Furthermore, every direct job of the public school system in the county is associated with another .86 jobs in the local economy.” This converts into a total of 2,093 jobs, of which, based on the .86 factor, 968 are outside of the school system.

Significant benefits like these can easily be overlooked because quantifying them is not something one can do on the back of an envelope. Instead the Salisbury researchers used a sophisticated software platform and data matrix for each county supplied by MIG, Inc. (formerly, the Minnesota IMPLAN Group). This economic assessment tool was first developed 35 years ago by the federal government (USDA Forest Service and FEMA) and subsequently improved and distributed for wide public use by the University of Minnesota.

(IMPLAN is currently used by government agencies, colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, corporations, and business development and community planning organizations. For the interesting history of IMPLAN and a good explanation of how it works, go to the MIG, INC. entry in Wikipedia.)

Type 3 – Property Values, Productivity, Business Attraction:

The third and most elusive category of benefits from publicly-provided education includes impacts like enhancements to property values and to business productivity. High-quality schools attract families whose members have skills that make them “net wealth

creators”. Such families bid up home prices, increase productivity of businesses, and contribute in a variety of ways to local quality-of-life.

A widely-cited report from 2004, *Public Schools and Economic Development: What the Research Shows*, by Jonathan D. Weiss of Arlington, VA-based ManTech SRS Technologies, Inc., leads with the following bullet-point summary:

- “There is a clear consensus among researchers that education enhances productivity.
- “Research indicates that quality public schools can help make states and localities more economically competitive.
- “Public schools indisputably influence residential property values.
- “Emerging evidence suggests that the quality, size, and shape of school facilities themselves affect economic development.”

Spelling out the data behind the assertion about property values, the Weiss report states: “[A] host of academic studies argue that school quality has a direct and positive influence on residential property values. Research shows that, holding all else constant, homes in high-performing school districts sell for higher prices than homes in low-performing school districts. . . . The impact can measure in the thousands of dollars and increase home values as much as fourteen percent.”

The Salisbury researchers roll this kind of impact into their analysis and conclude that the Type 3 benefits from what QAC spends on its schools amount to about \$18 million per year. Their report says that its methodology “assumes the presence of good quality education in each jurisdiction” – which is certainly true in QAC. But we wonder if maybe the assumption is too weak: QAC education is not merely “good”, it’s top quality – so maybe our Type 3 benefits are larger than the researchers estimate.

Be that as it may, the Salisbury study provides yet another reason – a hard-headed economic one – for saying, as the *Chronicle* has said before: QAC schools are a winner!

QAC FARM STANDS – WE HAVE WHAT CITY-DWELLERS CRAVE

Last year at this time the *Chronicle* ran an article under the above title that listed our local farm stands. This year, the headline that we have “what city-dwellers crave” is truer than ever.

“Farmers Markets” are multiplying in DC and Baltimore. They are popping up in schools, churches, parks, federal government buildings (appropriately, the Departments of Agriculture and Transportation), medical centers, even in an RFK Stadium parking lot. These Farmers Markets, like our own in Centreville, are usually open twice a week.

Grocery Store Produce – Local?

Then there are the increasingly prevalent “Local Farm Produce” sections in chain grocery stores. We checked out what “local” produce means for Whole Foods Markets, a chain with stores in more densely populated areas. According to their website, “local” means that the produce has travelled 7 or fewer hours by car or truck. Although the website says some stores may have a stricter standard, that’s a global definition of “local”!

More and more, grocery stores promote their “local” produce by identifying their sources, often naming the farm along with its location. In our area, you can sometimes find produce grown here in Queen Anne’s County in a local chain supermarket.

More Local Sources

Another expanding source for fresh local food is from Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms. Purchasers contract for the growing season (usually about 22 weeks) for a weekly case of five to eight different in-season fruits and vegetables, delivered to a location convenient to the purchaser. And then there are the Pick-Your-Own farms, especially popular for strawberries, peaches, apples, and pumpkins.

Where to Buy Local Produce in QAC

As you might expect in a county whose major commercial enterprise is agriculture, many

farmers take advantage of a variety of outlets for their produce. They sell at their own farm stand, they supply other farm stands and farm markets (and sometimes grocery chain stores), and they may offer pick-your-own opportunities.

Listed below are the QAC farm stands and farm markets we know about. Then, too, a new stand may at any time pop up at the entrance to a farm lane, the result of a particularly abundant yield or enterprising children looking to pick up a little extra money.

We wish we knew them all, large and small, established and new, and we apologize to any not listed.

LOCAL PRODUCE STANDS AND PICK-YOUR-OWN FARMS

ARNOLD FARMS

219 Double Creek Rd.
Chestertown
410.778.4833
• Home grown vegetables
• Tues-Sun 10-6

BENGUSTA MARKET

1214 Barclay Road, Barclay
410.758.3583
• Vegetables and melons -
home grown
• Fri-Sun, 10-5

CASSINELLI WINERY AND VINEYARD

3830 Church Hill Rd.
(Rt 213)
www.cassinelliwinery.com
• Pick your own plums,
peaches, apples
• End June-October

CENTREVILLE FARMERS’ MARKET

Court House Square,
Centreville
• Local farmers have stands
• Wed & Sat 9-1

CHERRY

BLOSSOM FARMS

1189 Roberts Station Rd.
(Rt 19)
410.310.0341
• Home grown vegetables,
melons
• 7 days a week, 11-7

FARMER JOHNS

324 Romancoke Road
Stevensville
410.643.CORN
• Local produce in season
• Mon-Sat 9-7; Sun 9-6

GODFREY’S FARM

302 Leager Rd. Sudlersville
www.godfreysfarm.com
• Farm stand and
pick your own
• Large variety of home
grown fruit and vegetables.
• 7 days a week, 7-5

HIGGY’S FARM MARKET

5306 Church Hill Rd (Rt 213)
Church Hill
410.556.6667
• Local produce
• Mon 6-3; Tues-Sat
6am-8pm; Sun 7-5

KENT FORT FARM

125 Eastern Lane
Stevensville
410.643.1650
• Produce, U-Pick fruit
• Peach Festival Aug 4
• Wed & Fri 9-2

KENT ISLAND FARMERS’ MARKET

Christ Episcopal Church
830 Romancoke Rd.
Stevensville
www.kentislandfarmersmarket.com

• Wide variety of fruit,
vegetables, dairy products,
meat, chicken, baked goods,
etc., some organic
• Thursdays, 3:30-6:30
year around, except
Thanksgiving (on Tues.
before)

LOWERY’S PRODUCE

1908 Main St. Chester
410.643.4577
• Home grown and local
produce
• 7 days a week, 9-7

MASON FARMS MARKET

1905 Ruthsburg Rd (Rt 304)
Queen Anne
www.masonsheritage.com
• Home grown and local fruit,
vegetables, baked goods,
dairy products
• Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat 9-5
Sun 10-6, Closed Monday

PERKINS PRODUCE & FLOWERS

301 Wright’s Neck Rd.
Centreville, off Rte 18
• Local produce
• Weekdays 10-5:30, Sat 9-5;
• Sun 9-4; closed Tuesday

TONY’S PRODUCE

At Canine Country Club
915 Bennett Point Rd.
Queenstown
• Pesticide free vegetables &
melons

WHITE MARSH ACRES

515 White Marsh Rd.,
Centreville
www.whitemarshorchard.com
410.490.6137

• Pick your own peaches,
nectarines, plums, apples,
pears, blackberries
• Daylight hours July on

WHITE PINES FARM

213 & White Pines Lane
Church Hill
410.490.1369
• Wide variety of home-grown
produce
• 7 days a week, 10-6

**WHEN WILL ALL THOSE GOOD
VEGETABLES AND FRUIT BE READY TO EAT?**

Harvest times vary with weather and variety, but here’s
a good list of what to expect when.

VEGETABLES			
Asparagus	Apr 25-June 15	Gourds	Sept-Oct
Beans, <i>snap</i>	June 10-Sept 15	Okra	July 15-Aug 30
Beans, <i>lima</i>	July 20-Sept 1	Peas, <i>green</i>	June 10-July 1
Beans, <i>pole</i>	June 25-Aug 30	Peas, <i>black eye</i>	July 20-Aug 30
Beets	July 4-Sept 1	Peppers	July 25-Sept 15
Cabbage	June 1-Sept 15	Potatoes	July 1-Sept 30
Carrots	July 10-Sept 15	Potatoes <i>sweet</i>	Sept 5-Dec 15
Corn, <i>yellow</i>	June 25-Sept 15	Pumpkins	Sept 10-Nov 30
Corn, <i>white</i>	June 25-Sept 15	Spinach, <i>spring</i>	May
Corn, <i>Indian</i>	Oct-Nov	Spinach, <i>fall</i>	Oct-Nov
Cucumbers	July 1-Sept 1	Squash, <i>summer</i>	June 25-Sept 1
Cucumbers, <i>pickling</i>	July 1-Aug 1	Tomatoes	July 4-Sept 15
Eggplant	July 25-Sept 10	Turnips	Aug 15-Nov 1
Gourds	Sept-Oct		
FRUIT			
Apples	Aug 15-Nov 5	Cider	late summer-fall
Blackberries	July 4-Aug 1	Grapes, <i>wine & table</i>	Aug 15-Sept 20
Blackberries, <i>thornless</i>	Aug 1-Sept 10	Nectarines	July 25- Aug 25
Black raspberries	June 15-July 10	Peaches	July 5-Sept 20
Red raspberries	June 15-July 10	Pears	Aug 15-Oct 15
Blueberries	June 20-Aug 1	Plums	July 15-Sept 15
Cantaloupes	July 15-Sept 15	Strawberries	early May-June 20
Cherries, <i>sour</i>	June 15-July 15	Watermelons	Aug 1-Oct 1
Cherries, <i>sweet</i>	June 10-July 10	Watermelons, <i>sugarbaby</i>	July 20-Oct 1

– Adapted from *Queen Anne’s County Farm and Services Directory*

EDITORIAL: QACTV

If you ever want to find out more after reading the *Chronicle's* brief summaries from the minutes of the County Commissioners and the Planning Commission, you can watch the meetings themselves – and at your convenience. You don't need to have access to cable television to see these meetings, because we are fortunate in our County to have QACTV operating both as a TV channel and as a website.

The website, www.qactv.com, provides considerably more than television coverage of some county meetings and events. It provides 24/7 access to viewing past meetings of the Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Commission, the Board of Education, election events, school events, Board of Appeals, Animal Control, and local business, agriculture, and environmental informational pieces. And these are just some of the offerings in QACTV's archives!

To access all that QACTV has to offer, go to www.qactv.com. There you will see four boxes to click on. One box lets you watch what is currently running on QACTV-7 on your computer, thus eliminating the need to receive QACTV-7 on your television set. Another box has searchable County press releases and public notices; a third has QACTV's extensive searchable archives that include the meetings of various Boards and Commissions as well as the informational pieces listed in the previous paragraph. The last box has QACTV-7's searchable TV programming schedule with an option in some cases to immediately call up the program to your computer.

Always interested in finding out more about our County, the *Chronicle* looked at some of the informational pieces in the archives section of the website. There were lots of items of interest. One was Mr. Matthew Clark's innovative building that he designed and built in 2011 for his cabinetry and millwork business on 213 near Church Hill. Tired of the energy costs and determined to have no – zero! – heating bills, this Washington College graduate, who began carpentry in his early teens, researched and designed his new 3700 sq.ft. building with no-cost heating as the goal. In the video, he describes the materials and techniques that did in fact result in no heating bill in his first winter (2011-12) in his new building. Besides watching the video about Mr. Clark and his building, you can learn more about his craftsmanship and his cabinetry and millwork business by going to his website www.kentcabinetry.net.

Another QACTV video introduced Alison Howard and the Howards' Homestead Farms – an organic produce farm near Millington. Alison explains what it takes to have an organic farm. It is always rewarding to hear from people who are passionate and successful in what they do. The standards Homestead Farms must meet are demanding, but meeting them has allowed the Howards to sell their produce to DC restaurants and their grain to organic feed mills in Pennsylvania for certified organic dairy and poultry feed. In addition, they are part of the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, distributing shares of their organic produce in many locations on the Eastern and nearby Western Shore. You can learn more about all the offerings of Homestead Farms by going to their website at www.freshorganicvegetables.com.

The qactv.com website and channel QACTV-7 are great ways to find out about events and enterprises in this remarkable county of ours.

The Queen Anne's Chronicle

**The Queen Anne's Chronicle is published by
Queen Anne's Conservation Association.**

Chris Pupke – Chairman of the Board

Jay Falstad – Executive Director

Mary Campbell – Editor

Queen Anne's Conservation Association (QACA), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, is the Eastern Shore's oldest conservation organization. Its mission is to promote stewardship of Queen Anne's County's natural resources and to protect its rural character and small towns while encouraging the management of prudent and sustainable growth.

Queen Anne's Conservation Association

P.O. Box 157 | Centreville, MD 21617 | www.QACA.org

COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS

Here are selected items summarized from the approved minutes of the County Commissioners' meetings.

April 10, 2012. The Commissioners:

- Considered extending for two months, beyond the scheduled expiration date of June 30, 2012, the County's agreement to operate the Chesapeake College Pool, the annual cost of which has averaged \$65,000 over the past three years;
- Granted KRM Development permission to install and maintain upgraded landscaping at the two entrances to the Chesapeake Bay Business Park.
- Received from Budget Director Seeman and Budget Analyst Rank a finance review of the current fiscal year showing a projected \$2.2 million in expenditure savings and a \$2.0 million revenue surplus over budget.
- Heard one person speak at Press and Public Comment..

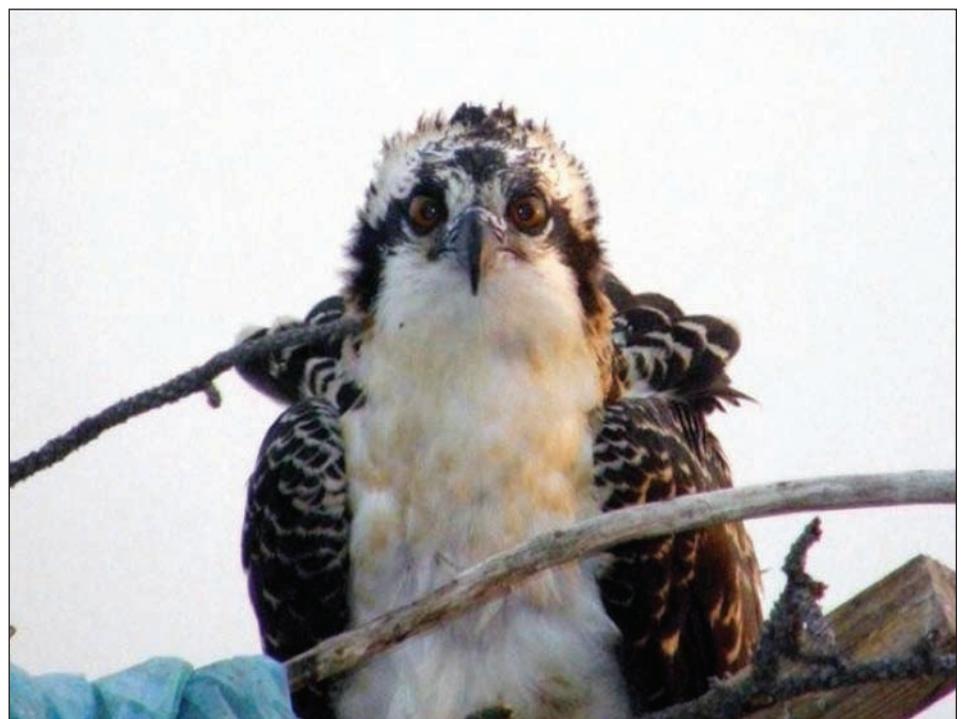
April 24, 2012. The Commissioners:

- Endorsed a grant application to the State by Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. (ESHI) for the "Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area".
- Supported an application for re-certification of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) program in QAC by MDP and the MALPF Board, enabling the County to retain, and use for farmland preservation, much more of the revenues from the Agricultural Transfer Tax than if the County were not certified.
- Agreed to propose for FY 2013 a real property tax rate of \$0.8471 per \$100 of assessed value, the

same as the FY2012 rate.

- Approved, Olds opposed, a request from the Board of Education to allocate \$60,000 from FY 2010 BOE operating fund balances for facilities repairs and classroom technologies upgrades.
- Requested the County Attorney to draft ordinances enacting certain proposed amendments to the County's Land Use and Development Law (Chapter 18 of the Code) concerning increased density of apartment developments; increased height of non-residential and multi-family buildings; weddings and parties at B&B's; expansion of aquaculture operations; and authorization for "big box" retail operations in three more zoning districts.
- Designated, upon a proposal by Mrs. Dawn Kelly's 2nd Grade Class at Matapeake Elementary School, "Caring" as the Character Counts Pillar of the Month for May 2012.
- Received a report from Ms. Mary Margaret Revell Goodwin and Mr. Eric Hoffman on fundraising and other plans for the War of 1812 Commemoration in Queen Anne's County, including funding all aspects of the quarter-acre Slippery Hill Monument, scheduled to become the County's major tourist point for the Commemoration.
- Received an update from the Economic Development Commission (William Stoops, Chairman) on the formulation of a 10-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan that balances quality of life with economic development and includes (1) as a short-term strategy: the

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Up close to a QAC spring and summer resident. An osprey looks out from the nest.

Photo Credit – David Godfrey

THE SOUNDS OF SUMMER

By JANE SCOTT

The soft hooting of owls in the night, the overhead twittering of chimney swifts, and the high whine of cicadas on a drowsy afternoon; as birdsong is the sound of spring, these are the sounds of summer.

Chimney swifts

The chimney swifts seem to come out of nowhere. They just appear, darting over the rooftop in acrobatic circles. Nicknamed by some the “flying cigar,” chimney swifts fly so fast and flutter their wings so rapidly that they seem to be alternating beats. Not so, I am told. At the same time, their wings are so streamlined and structurally efficient that aeronautical engineers study them to measure how shapes alter drag and lift.

Swifts belong to the family Apodidae, which means “without feet” in Latin. That’s a bit of an exaggeration, but their feet are very small and rarely used. Swifts live most of their life on the wing. They apparently roost only at nesting time, gathering sticks on the fly and sticking them to the insides of hollow trees or chimneys with their saliva. According to an article I read in *Natural History Magazine*, they may even sleep on the wing, slowing down to a mere twenty miles an hour during snooze time.

Cicadas

To my way of thinking, it is the thin whine of the cicada that truly epitomizes the dog days of summer. Their ascending hum seems to intensify the humidity, and makes me long for a soft seat, a cold drink and a good book.

One rarely sees a cicada; they hang out high in the trees. Only the males sing; they are doing their best to attract a mate. Actually “sing” is not exactly the right word. “Play” would be more accurate, since he vibrates a circular membrane called a tymbal on the side of his abdomen, sucking it in and out so fast that the clicks blend into a high whine that can be as loud as 100 decibels; somewhere between a subway train and a power mower!

The waiting female “hears” his music with a complex system of minute pipes, air pockets, and tympanic membranes in her abdomen. If she finds a certain song appealing, she answers with a maneuver called a “wing flick”, a brisk movement of her wings that the male can both see and hear. He then will reply with more clicking of his tymbals and together they will launch a new song called a “courtship call.”

The female then lays her eggs in thin twigs, slicing into the wood with her ovipositor and depositing up to a dozen in each slit. The eggs take six to ten weeks to hatch into nymphs that

fall to the ground, burrow into the earth, and may spend the next two to five years feeding on tree root juices. However, because some are timed to emerge every summer, they are known as annual cicadas, *Tibicen linnei*. (They are not the seventeen-year variety, last seen here in 2004 and not due again until the summer of 2021!)

Occasionally in early summer, you can find the hollow remains of a brown beetle-like shell stuck fast to the bark of a tree. The mature cicada has already “hatched” through a slit down its back, expanding into a creature nearly twice the size of this empty husk. Because adult cicadas live only from two to four weeks, they must immediately get to work to find a mate and start the cycle all over again.

True Bugs

Cicadas, incidentally, are bugs. While many of us call all insects “bugs,” technically, only those in the order *Homoptera* qualify. To be a bug, an insect must be a vegetarian with tube-like mouthparts, a description that also applies to aphids, scale and leafhoppers.

Crickets and Katydid

Our other summer singers, the crickets and Katydid, are not bugs but grasshoppers. They sing by rubbing the sharp edge of one of their forewings against a file-like ridge on the other, a method that has been described as “shrugging their shoulders at high speed.” Some kinds of crickets sing during the day, while others sing only at night. Katydid also sing at night. Their incessant “Katy-did, Katy-didn’t” begins in late August and continues into the fall.

It is said that the sound of Katydid signals six weeks until frost. Whether that is true or not, temperature does have a direct influence on grasshoppers’ songs. They all sing more slowly as the temperature drops, and stop altogether at sixty degrees. They also quit at 100 degrees. An entomologist once figured out how to tell the temperature from the song of the snowy tree

cricket, a species common in many parts of the country. He simply counted the number of chirps in 13 seconds and added 37 to arrive at the degrees Fahrenheit.

Other particularly musical entomologists, tell us that the black-horned tree cricket sings on the third F above middle C, while the four-spotted tree cricket pulses on the second B above C. Not having perfect pitch, I will have to take their word for it!

Jane Scott, a writer and illustrator, is the author of Between Ocean and Bay: A Natural History of Delmarva (Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1991), and Field and Forest, A Guide to Native Landscapes for Gardeners and Naturalist (Blackburn Press, 2002) as well as other works. She traces her roots in Delaware back to the 1730’s and now lives on the Eastern Shore.



Such small creatures and such a loud noise! Late summer noise makers, a katydid, right, and, left, a cicada. This cicada’s popular name is “Dogday Harvestfly” because it is heard and seen during the hot “Dog Days” of late summer.

Photo Credit – David Godfrey

Commissioner’s Meetings, continued from Page 4

continued development of the Matapeake Professional Park, infill commercial development as in the Town of Centreville, and further analysis of the commercial property inventory, and (2) as a prerequisite to a longer-term strategy, a survey to ascertain the wants and needs of the residents of Queen Anne’s County, as discussed by Dr. Memo Diriker and BEACON from the Frank Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University.

- Authorized an application for a Maryland Community Development Block Grant of \$800,000 for Phase II construction at the Our Haven Home shelter/transitional housing at 325 State Street in Stevensville.
- Honored for his distinguished leadership and dedication Dr. Chinnadura Devadason, Health Officer for Queen Anne’s County since 1995.
- Heard one person speak at Press and Public Comment.

April 25, 2012. The Commissioners:

- Held a budget work session at which a proposed FY 2013 budget was adopted, an explanatory budget letter to County residents was approved, and a series of public hearings on the proposed budget was scheduled.

May 8, 2012. The Commissioners:

- Received a Hurricane Irene FEMA Reimbursement Update reporting receipt from FEMA of \$272,678.85, amounting to 75% of the County’s cost of emergency protective measures, road repairs, park and facility damages, and debris cleanup associated with the hurricane.
- Expressed support for the efforts of QAC Fitness and Aquatic Society, Inc. to have Chesapeake College keep the pool open, without further cost to the County, until March 2013, at which time there should be another pool available for use.
- Approved, upon submission by Director of Animal Services Dave MacGlashan, a moratorium on adoptions of pit-bull and pit-bull mix dogs until the County’s liability exposure is clarified in light of the recent Court of Appeals ruling that such dogs are inherently dangerous and that therefore their owners and others with control over them are strictly liable for damages to any person whom they attack.
- Proclaimed May 2012 as Older Americans Month and as Foster Parent Appreciation Month and adopted, Dunmyer dissenting, an ordinance sponsored by Commissioner Olds declaring English to be the official language of the County, subject to a number of exceptions allowing use of a language other than English in, e.g., foreign language classes, private communications, etc.
- Heard three persons speak at Press and Public Comment.

LIVING WITH THUNDERSTORMS IN QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

The National Weather Service map on this page tells us that here in QAC we get about 28 “thunderstorm days” each year. Fortunately, if one prefers one’s rain in less violent, if also less spectacular, forms, that’s fewer thunderstorm days than most anywhere in the country outside of New England and the Far West.

Of course there can be more than one thunderstorm on a thunderstorm day. Here is what *The Weather Identification Handbook (2003)*, by the aptly named Storm Dunlop, has to say about multiple thunderstorms (p.168):

“Thunderstorms very rarely consist of individual cumulonimbus clouds. In general, they are groups of showers, each of which . . . has a relatively short lifetime, although the overall group may last for several hours. Sometimes the cells will be relatively disorganized, but more often the inflow into a particularly active cell will lead to the formation of a series of cells, which themselves then grow and continue the storm activity, before decaying in their turn. These are known as multi-cell storms. At night, it is easy to pick out the active cells by the way in which the lightning flashes are grouped in clusters.”

Dunlop goes on to discuss how multi-cell storms can sometimes get organized into a moving, self-perpetuating squall line, as humid air drawn into the storm creates new cells ahead of the line. We are very familiar here with these lines of storms sweeping across our area. He also talks about the horrific supercells that occur when 100 mph updrafts and downdrafts get organized into one giant cell that spawns tornadoes and huge hailstones. We won’t go into any of that here, because, at least until recently, supercells haven’t been the threat in QAC that they are in the South and Midwest.

When and How Much

The National Water and Climate Center states that most of our thunderstorms here in the County occur in May through August. Again, however, does that perhaps reflect the age of their data (1961-1985)? Wouldn’t we now want add on at least part of September?

It would be interesting to know how much of our annual rainfall is provided by thunderstorms, but that’s a level of detail that we don’t seem to have. Some sense of answer can perhaps be gotten from the facts that (1) the one-third of the year represented by May through August gives us only a shade more than its share of total annual precipitation, and (2) according to (unsourced) data on www.usa.com, in QAC we have on average 74.78 days in the year when there is one-tenth of an inch or more of precipitation. So if 28, or about one-third, of our rainy days are thunderstorm days (see above), are we prepared to guess that as much as one-third of our rain comes from thunderstorms? And if that’s true, doesn’t it mean that rainfall will vary considerably around the County, as the thunderstorms follow their erratic paths?

Someone either has, or will get, the information about how much of the rain at their location comes from thunderstorms. Please send it to www.qaca.org.

Safety in Thunderstorms

The National Weather Service reports an average of 54 deaths per year from lightning strikes

in the U.S. over the past 30 years. Recently, perhaps due to increased public education (“When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!”), the number has fallen to 29 in 2010 and in 2011, to 26, the fewest of any year on record. In Maryland between 2001 and 2010, there were only 4 deaths from lightning, and in Delaware there were none.

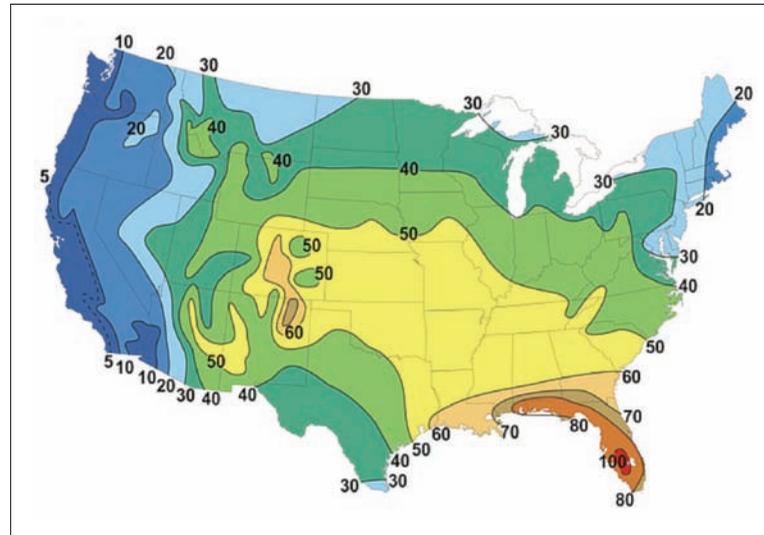
But these encouraging figures don’t tell the whole story. Because in the U.S. only about 10% of lightning strikes are fatal, there are lot more people being struck, and very badly injured, than the number of deaths would suggest.

Wikipedia, in “Lightning Strikes”, details different kinds of strikes other than a (usually fatal) direct hit (e.g. person touching or getting a “side splash” from an object that is struck, current passing from ground into victim, blast injury) and observes: “Lightning strikes can produce severe injuries . . . with up to 80% of survivors sustaining long-term injuries. . . [in which] nerves and muscles may be directly damaged by the high voltage.”

NOAA elaborates on these injuries: “People struck by lightning suffer from a variety of long-term, debilitating symptoms, including memory loss, attention deficits, sleep disorders, chronic pain, numbness, dizziness, stiffness in joints, irritability, fatigue, weakness, muscle spasms, depression, and more.”

Here’s the official safety advice from the National Weather Service (http://www.srh.noaa.gov/jetstream/lightning/lightning_safety.htm). We urge you to read it, because we

think the chances are that you will, as we did, learn something worth knowing. And remember, each year in Maryland there are on average over 88,000 cloud to ground lightning flashes. . .



Average annual number of thunderstorm days in the continental United States.

— Source: National Weather Service

WHERE TO GO

The safest location during a thunderstorm is inside a large enclosed structure with plumbing and electrical wiring. These include shopping centers, schools, office buildings, and private residences.

If lightning strikes the building, the plumbing and wiring will conduct the electricity more efficiently than a human body. If no buildings are available, then an enclosed metal vehicle such as an automobile, van, or school bus makes a decent alternative.

WHAT TO DO

Once inside a sturdy building, stay away from electrical appliances and plumbing fixtures. As an added safety measure, stay in an interior room.

If you are inside a vehicle, roll the windows up, and avoid contact with any conducting paths leading to the outside of the vehicle (e.g. radios, CB’s, ignition, etc.).

WHERE NOT TO GO

Not all types of buildings or vehicles are safe during thunderstorms. Buildings which are NOT SAFE (even if they are “grounded”) have exposed openings. These include beach shacks, metal sheds, picnic shelters/pavilions, carports, and baseball dugouts. Porches are dangerous as well.

Convertible vehicles offer no safety from lightning, even if the top is “up”. Other vehicles which are NOT SAFE during lightning storms are those which have open cabs, such as golf carts, tractors, and construction equipment.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Lightning can travel great distances through power lines, especially in rural areas. Do not use electrical appliances, ESPECIALLY corded telephones unless it is an emergency (cordless and cell phones are safe to use).

Computers are also dangerous as they usually are connected to both phone and electrical cords. Do not take a shower or bath or use a hot tub.

SAFETY AFTER THE STORM. . .

We’re often reminded about safety precautions to be taken during a storm. We hear much less about safety *after* the storm, but there are hazards then as well.

One of them is going swimming after a storm. The water may be unsafe — because the added run-off from the storm may have caused the water to be abnormally polluted.

State and local health departments, as well as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), advise that in the summer swimmers and others should avoid coming into contact with tidal or fresh water for 48 hours after significant rain storms.

“I’m amazed how few people know our water can be unhealthy for days after a storm. This important information isn’t getting out there, but it needs to,” says Alison Prost, CBF’s Maryland

Executive Director. “A summer thunderstorm flushes pollution from our urban and suburban landscapes into nearby creeks, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. Bacteria from failing septic systems, pet waste, or manure can end up in waters where we swim or recreate.”

The pollution can be bacterial, increasing the risk of stomach ailments, skin and blood infections, and intestinal illnesses. Or it can be nutrient pollution, stimulating algal blooms that can cause liver disease, skin rashes, nausea and vomiting.

CBF observes while officially there were 439 times last summer when Maryland beaches had high bacteria counts, the real number could have been far higher since officials don’t necessarily monitor after storms when bacteria counts are the highest.

Some day, as the *Chronicle* reported in our last issue about the renewed Bay clean-up effort, our waters may once again be safely swimmable — but for now we have to be careful, and especially for our children.

CELEBRATING EARLY AUGUST – REALLY!

There are those who say that August and February are the two worst months on the Eastern Shore – August is way too hot and February is way too gloomy.

But actually, when we stop to think about it, the beginnings of those two months have long been specially celebrated, and rightly so.

This is not the time of the year to go very far into February's celebrations, other than to remind ourselves about the growing popularity of Groundhog Day on February 2, and perhaps to note that one of the four great Irish "quarter days", the ancient Gaelic feast of Imbolc, was celebrated at the beginning of February.

August 1 was another quarter day celebrated in ancient times all over the British Isles. We'll come back to that in a moment – but here today in QAC we have our own early August celebration: the 70th Annual Queen Anne's County 4-H Fair, August 6 -11, 2012!

QAC County Fair

The Queen Anne's County Fair is an event that needs no introduction to those of us who live here – all of us have attended it, and greatly enjoyed it, many times over. And many of us have participated actively in one or more of its multitude of events and activities.

The website of the Maryland Office of Tourism tries valiantly to communicate in a few words what we have going on here: "Animals, educational exhibits, rodeo, jousting, truck/tractor pulls, chain saw carving, carnival, food and craft vendor, music, country setting."

The Fair's own website unpacks this summary into a crowded schedule of events of all kinds, filling a week of 13-hour days. From livestock, horses, dogs, llamas, poultry and

small pets, to art, baked goods, candy, flowers, preserved foods (including wine), handcrafts, needlework, clothing, photography, farm crops, and fruits and vegetables, the Fair shows off a truly astonishing range of accomplishments.

Take "fruits and vegetables": there are no less than 48 categories in which multiple entries are made. The list starts with # 1: "Plate of five white potatoes". Number two, as you might expect, is a similar plate of red potatoes. Then there is a host of singleton items (Cabbage, Watermelon, Pumpkin [varying sizes]), bunches (Beets, Kale, Grapes [purple, white]), lots more plates (five red Tomatoes, three slicing Cucumbers, five Okra), quarts (String Beans), pints (Bush [and Pole] Lima Beans shelled [and unshelled]) and half pints (Blackberries).

At the Fair, all the productivity and creativity of this favored County is on display, surrounded by music, games, good food, amusements, contests, politicking, socializing. The Fair is truly a celebration of August, a harvest fair with roots deeper in the past than even the 70 years that we claim for its modern history.

Harvest Festivals

The folklorists tell us that in ancient times the beginning of August was widely marked, in the British Isles and northern Europe, with outdoor gatherings to celebrate the beginning of the harvest. For the Irish, the festival was Lughnasadh (pronounced *LOO-na-sab*), a joyous occasion of feasting, games and contests, when the people gave thanks for the triumph of the "many-skilled" Lugh over malevolent spirits who threatened the harvest.

For the Welsh, their early August harvest festival was Calan Awst, or Gathering Day. For the Anglo-Saxons, the first of August

was Lammas Day, the festival of the wheat harvest. Lammas was "the feast of first fruits", and it was the custom for pieces of a loaf baked from the new crop to be placed at the corners of the barn to protect the harvested grain.

While Lughnasadh is still celebrated in some parts of Ireland, Calan Awst and Lammas have disappeared into the past. But the spirit behind all these festivities, the August spirit, still manifests itself today – in the QAC County Fair and in the widespread American propensity to finally kick back and go on vacation.

In the twenty-first century, then, the beginning of August still announces a special time for celebration and relaxation. Let's go to the Fair!



Getting acquainted with domestic animals during the first of many visits to the Queen Anne's County Fair. – Chronicle Photo

PLANNING COMMISSION

At its regular meeting on May 10, 2012, the Planning Commission approved a major site plan, The Village at Chester, proposing an apartment building with twenty age-restricted units. Construction is proposed on a two-acre site on Postal Road in Chester.

The Commission considered three proposed text amendments.

- It recommended approval of text amendment TA 12-12, which increases fines for civil violations of the zoning code, making the penalty for each offense subsequent to the first double that of the previous fine.
- It recommended approval with amendment of TA 12-05, which increases from 50 to 100 years old the age at which a structure is deemed to be "historic." The recommended amendment would maintain the 50 year designation for structures in a geographic area that has been deemed historic by the state or federal government.
- An unfavorable recommendation was given for TA 12-07, which would have restricted the use of community piers to residents and tenants of the community.

Staff reported on the decision of the Court of Appeals in the case that challenged the Maryland Board of Public Works' decision in 2007 denying approval of a license for the proposed Four Seasons development to dredge or fill State wetlands. The Court ruled that the Board should have limited its review to the question of the impact on the wetlands of the license sought. The case will be returned to the Board of Public Works for reconsideration consistent with the legal interpretation in the Court's ruling.

Staff also reviewed implications of (State) Senate Bill 236-2012, which limits new construction in areas not served by public sewers. Commissioner Barry Waterman proposed that the Planning Commission recommend to the County Commissioners legislation to increase from 5 to 7 the number of units that can be developed as a minor subdivision. Under SB 236, local changes of this kind must be adopted by December 2012, or current definitions must be maintained.

The Commission discussed briefly a list of issues related to the Commission's Rules. These will be considered further at the Planning Commission's June meeting.

"THE VISION WE SHARE"

The VISION is to continue the ethic that the County remains a quintessential rural community with the overall character of the County preserved as:

- *A predominantly rural county with small towns connected by creeks and county roads through fields and forest – **a great place to live;***
- *A county that encourages agriculture, seafood and maritime industries, tourism and outdoor sports, small business and high tech enterprise – **a good place to work;***
- *A county that is a faithful steward of its natural and cultural heritage – **a good neighbor for the Bay and other Eastern Shore counties;***
- *A county in which development does not impair the quality of life enjoyed by all – **a community that protects the expectations and opportunities of all its citizens;***
- *A county that supports the **highest quality of education** that seeks to fully prepare its citizens for the future.*

(Queen Anne's County 2010 Comprehensive Plan,
"Overall Community Vision", page 2)

The Rain of Queen Anne's, *continued from Page 1*

Centreville data from 1971 to 2000 and that the average annual rainfall for that period was 43.43 inches—almost an inch more than the NWCC number.

The Maryland Climatologist also gave us, from the Centreville station, a good breakdown of QAC rainfall by month. That shows that on average our rainfall is (or was during 1971-2000) pretty evenly distributed throughout the year. Only May and September had as much as 4 inches or little over; only February had (a little) less than 3 inches; the other months didn't stray far from the monthly average of 3.6 inches.

When we asked the Maryland Climatologist about rainfall data for later than 2000, we were told that Centreville station didn't seem to have operated after that year. An inquiry to the National Weather Service in Mt. Holly NJ brought a similar response: "We do not currently have any observers in Queen Anne's County."

So the *Chronicle* set out on its own to see if we could find something more up to date. After all, if climate change is happening, old data about QAC rainfall are going to be less and less helpful.

NOAA's National Climatic Data Center (NCDC), billing itself as "the world's largest active archive of weather data", has rainfall data from 1981 to 2010 for a vast number of locations all over the world—but nothing from a station in Queen Anne's County. Encouraged by the fact that their data are much more current, however, we decided to take a look at what they have from nearby stations.

NCDC reports annual precipitation of 44.11 inches from Chestertown, 46.76 inches from Royal Oak, and 47.27 inches from Annapolis Police Barracks. All these numbers are markedly higher than the older 42-43 inch numbers coming from Centreville.

So are we to think that somehow QAC is a relatively drier place surrounded by locations with more rainfall? Or are we to think, as the *Chronicle* does (and said so above), that something like the 44-inch number from Chestertown is probably the best estimate of our recent average annual rainfall?

The Problem with Averages

The problem with averages is that they are averages: you could average 44 inches of rain a year but it would play havoc with farming, for example, if you had 22 inches one year, 66 inches the next, and so on. The problem becomes more acute if, as some say, weather is going to become more variable as climate changes.

What, therefore, can we learn about how consistent our recent annual rainfall totals have been in QAC? What's the year-to-year variability of rainfall in the County?

Lacking (as discussed above) any up-to-date data for QAC, we went to the Maryland Climatologist's data for Baltimore,



Rainbow over Grove Creek

— Chronicle Photo

which go back to 1871 and continue up to the present. For 1871 to 2011, the Baltimore norm was 41.88 inches of precipitation annually. We looked at the yearly Baltimore data for 2001 through 2011 and found that:

- In 8 of the past 11 years, rainfall was *above* the long-term average.
- In 3 of the 8 above-average years (2003, 2009, 2011), rainfall was *way above* average — 55 inches and more!
- In 2 of the 3 below-average years (2001, 2007), it was *way below* — only 34-35 inches.

Presumably similar variations occurred in QAC during this time period, and farmers here may have unpleasant memories of these damaging departures from the average.

Footnote: Though the annual average rainfall in Baltimore from 1871 through 2011 was 41.88 inches, from 2001 through 2011 it was 46.40 inches. Is that telling us something?

The Problem of Location

From the perspective of anyone trying to grow things, there's not only the issue of getting the rain *when* you need it, but also *where* it's needed. All of us in Queen Anne's County are quite familiar with the phenomenon of driving home through a nice downpour, only to arrive and find that our own property got far less rain or none at all.

That's why many of us, even if we are not farmers, have a

simple rain gauge on the fence post next to the garden. We check it regularly to see how long we can go before the water will have drained away through the soil on our property and we will need another rain, first for the newly-planted shrubs and trees, and if the dryness continues, eventually even for more established plantings.

And that's why, even if there were still a station in Centreville recording and reporting precipitation, it wouldn't be all that helpful to people in Sudlersville or Church Hill, Stevensville or Wye Mills. What's really needed are folks reporting rainfall in several locations all over the County, and that's where something called CoCoRaHS comes in.

CoCoRaHS in QAC

The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) is a nonprofit community-based network of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds who measure and report precipitation. It was started in 1998 at Colorado State, its major sponsors are NOAA and NSF, and it now is in all 50 states. Participants use a standard high capacity 4" rain gauge, costing about \$25, that they purchase when they join the network.

What QAC needs is at least a half-dozen volunteers spaced out around the County, who read their rain gauges and report to the website, www.cocorahs.org, where their reports can all be accessed by the many users of CoCoRaHS rainfall data — ranging from the National Weather Service itself to city utilities, emergency managers, farmers, teachers, and neighbors in the community.

At present, however, QAC seems to have only one active CoCoRaHS station: Station Number MD-QA-6 in Queenstown at an elevation of 15 feet. Its reports show that Queenstown had 43.40 inches of rain in 2011, and for 2012 up through 8 a.m. on May 24 (the date on which 0.37 inches was recorded and on which this article was written), the rainfall in Queenstown totaled 11.39 inches. (At the same hour on the morning of May 24, just a few miles up Route 18 toward Centreville, 0.8 inches of rain was being emptied out of a non-standard rain gauge affixed to a fence post next to a garden.)

Footnote: Queenstown's reported 11.39 inches of rain was well below what QAC has historically gotten by that point in the year. According to the Maryland Climatologist's figures (1971-2000: see above), January through May rainfall in QAC averages 18.07 inches.

The *Chronicle* would love to hear from Station MD-QA-6, whoever you are (contact us through www.qaca.org). According to CoCoRaHS, you are the sole reporter in Queen Anne's County, and your example should inspire, for the benefit of all of us, additional participants in other locations around the County.

A Calendar Of Verses

JULY: SUMMER HEAT

Where I walk out to meet you on the
cloth of burning fields

the goldfinches leap up about my
feet like angry dandelions

quiver like a heartbeat in the air and are no more

— Yvor Winters*

*Song, from *Selected Poems of Yvor Winters*
(R.L. Barth ed., Ohio UP), by permission

AUGUST: SUMMER STORM

O God! when thou
Dost scare the world with tempests, set on fire
The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or fill,
With all the waters of the firmament,
The swift dark whirlwind that uproots the woods
... who forgets not, at the sight
Of these tremendous tokens of thy power,
His pride, and lays his strifes and follies by?

— William Cullen Bryant

