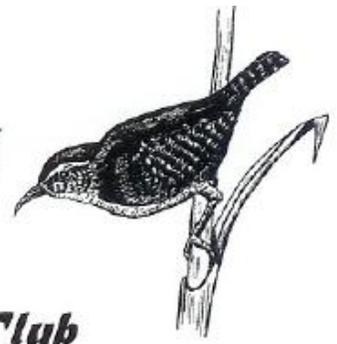




# Wrenderings



*The Newsletter of the Harford Bird Club*

Volume 28 Number 4

February, 2015

## President's Perch

As I mentioned in the last Wrenderings and at the January meeting, the American Birding Association was having a Mid-Atlantic Bird Club Conference at their new headquarters in Delaware. Ruth Bergstrom and I represented the Harford Bird Club at the conference and former club president Dave Webb was also present as an MOS representative. More than 50 birders from over 20 clubs were represented at the conference to discuss the many issues facing local bird clubs today.

Though we discussed a wide variety of issues, ABA President Jeff Gordon felt the underlying theme was engagement. As I heard the discussion, it was easy to see he was right. A quote from his Facebook post about the conference was "How do we engage new and more diverse audiences, how do we give more to and get more from our members, how do we serve the wider community who may never join a bird club at all, and how do we as birders best carry out the work of conserving the birds and habitat we hold so dear?" There were many ideas tossed about all of these questions and some examples of what has worked well with other clubs in the region.

Our club is full of wonderful and generous volunteers, and we have done a great job at promoting birds and the club at local schools and education centers like Harford Glen and Eden Mill. We continue to see new members on our walks, often from promotion in the local paper. Several other clubs at the conference noted that many first-timers come from notices in the paper. This is all great, but we can still try a few new ideas.

As discussed at the last club meeting, we probably should have a more active presence on social media. There are hundreds of bird lovers active on Facebook, that are unaware we even exist! Another idea that I liked was providing a Birding Open House field trip in the form of a Big Sit. Big Sits have become quite popular as a casual and social birding event. Friendly bird club members would take shifts throughout the day and people could stop by anytime during the day and have someone to show them birds and chat. Light refreshments and lawn chairs would be provided. I think this would be a perfect event in spring or fall at Swan Harbor. And finally, many clubs reported increased field trip participation by new birders by having later start times. And I'm not talking 9am, more like 1pm or 5pm. I led an evening field trip to Swan Harbor a couple years ago that was well received and well attended. We should consider adding a few of these to the schedule.

I look forward to talking to you more at the meeting in March. It was a lot of great information! ~ *Matt Hafner*

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## Plan Ahead!

- March Dinner Meeting, March 6. Churchville Presbyterian Church
- MOS Board Meeting, March 7, Woodstock, MD
- May Dinner Meeting, May 1. Harford Glen
- MOS Annual Conference, May 15-17, Hagerstown, MD

## Bird Droppings

### Club News?

Have news the club should know about? Births, deaths, marriages, or any other notable events that belong in the newsletter? Please contact Corresponding Secretary Madeline Lovera at 410-879-6098 or email to [lovebluebird206@gmail.com](mailto:lovebluebird206@gmail.com).

Our sympathy goes out to Phil Powers on the death of his mother in January.

### Welcome!

A warm Harford Bird Club welcome goes out to the following new members. Thank you for joining... we look forward to seeing you out there on our birding trips and at our meetings!

**DONNA M. JOHNSON of RISING SUN**  
**MARY MURRAY of BEL AIR**  
**LARRY HOPKINS of ABINGDON**  
**LOUISE C. SPANGLER of ABERDEEN**  
**CHRIS SPERLIN of FALLSTON**  
**ALEX MILLER of BEL AIR**

## March Dinner Meeting



The March dinner meeting presentation is entitled "Japan — Cranes, Owls, and Snow Monkeys" by Jean Wheeler. Jean took a recent trip to Japan and will be sharing her experience along many wonderful photos.

In addition, the 2014 awards will be presented at the March dinner meeting. Will you be a winner? Come to the meeting and find out.

## May Count 2015

Guess what's just around the corner? That's right ... spring, everyone's most anticipated time of the year. For us birders, well what could be better? That annual colorful, vocal passage known as the spring migration comes to town, and more birders look at more birds than perhaps any other time of the year. This May 9, 2015, the Harford Bird Club will be staging its annual county-wide May Count. For more information, contact the Coordinator, Rick Cheicante at [rickcheicante@cs.com](mailto:rickcheicante@cs.com)



### Harford Bird Club Executive Board

President	Matt Hafner	410-971-3203	<a href="mailto:hafner.matt@gmail.com">hafner.matt@gmail.com</a>
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Public Relations	<b>Vacant</b>		
Education Chairperson	Madeline Lovera	410-879-6098	<a href="mailto:lovebluebird206@gmail.com">lovebluebird206@gmail.com</a>
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# Harford Birdlife

by Monroe Harden

All things considered, our winter has been pretty mild so far. That hasn't stopped some nice birds from visiting our county. This report covers the period from Dec 1st, 2014 through Jan 31st, 2015.

## Geese, Swans, Ducks

JE found a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Swan Harbor on Dec 10th. JH and JG also saw this, or a different, one there on Dec 17th and 28th respectively. MH found one in Forest Hill on Jan 3rd. SH saw 2 **Snow Geese** flying over her Fallston home on Dec 19th. DK had 2 **Cackling Geese** at Turney's Pond in northern Harford County on Dec 28th. He also saw one there on Jan 20th. MA found one off Rt 543 on Jan 3rd.

BM counted over 500 **Tundra Swans** on the bay near Swan Harbor on Jan 30th. DK saw 12 **Northern Pintails** at Turney's Pond on Jan 1st. On Jan 3rd, he saw 6 male and 2 female **Canvasbacks** on the pond. He also saw 2 **American Black Ducks**, 1 **Green-winged Teal**, and about 20 **Ring-necked Ducks** there on Jan 20th. JE found a **White-winged Scoter** on the river off of Lapidum on Dec 13th. He also saw 2 **Long-tailed Ducks** there on Jan 20th.

## Grebes, Pelicans, Falcons, Cranes, Owls

TC saw a **Horned Grebe** off Lapidum on Jan 3rd. JE and others saw the banded **Brown Pelican** at Conowingo Dam on Dec 1st. DK had a **Merlin** on the wires near Turney's Pond on Jan 18th. DL saw 2 **Sandhill Cranes** flying over Gunpowder State Park on Dec 8th. DK's resident **Eastern Screech-Owl** made several appearances from a nest box at his home in northern Harford County.

## Thrasher, Warbler, Sparrows, Blackbirds, Finches

SS saw and photographed a **Brown Thrasher** at her Jarrettsville home on Jan 18th. It had been a frequent visitor to her garden. BP found a **Nashville Warbler** at his suet feeder in Bel Air on Jan 3rd. MA saw 4 **American Tree Sparrows** and 3 **Purple Finches** at Swan Harbor on Jan 1st. SH saw up to 8 **Chipping Sparrows** at her Fallston home throughout the period. MA had 35 or more **Rusty Blackbirds** near a pond at Clubhouse Road on Jan 1st. DK saw 2 male **Purple Finches** at his home on Jan 19th. BW had 3 female **Purple Finches** at his Forest Hill home on Dec 1st. He saw them through Dec 15th. He also had numerous woodpeckers, finches, and doves at his feeders. DK had a **Pine Siskin**

at his home on Dec 25th. MA also found one along the Swan Harbor entrance road on Jan 7th.

## Contributors

BM- Barry Marsh, BP- Bill Pfungsten, BW- Bob Werrlein, DK- Dennis Kirkwood, DL- Dave Littlepage, JE- Josh Emm, JG- John Gallo, JH- John Hubbell, MA- Matt Anthony, SH- Susan Hood, SS- Susan Stiles, TC- Tim Carney

## Harford Youth Birding

By Ruth Bergstrom

Bird Cams was the topic in December, and Early Birders Nick and Kevin presented many sites available to watch feeders, nesting eagles, herons, hawks, and owls. Nick also reviewed the Cornell site [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org) – an on-line field guide that has options to hear a bird's song – or watch a video. The group spotted 17 species on their bird walk including their first **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker!**



Dr. Dennis Kirkwood led the Early Birds on a journey to Belize for the January meeting. Not only did they learn of **Mottled Owls**, **Ringed**, **Pygmy**, and **Green Kingfishers**, **Red-legged Honey-creepers**, and many more beautiful birds, but the basilisk lizard that walks on water and the five wild cats that call Belize home.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## Harford Youth Birding

(Continued from page 3)



The first annual Christmas Bird Count for Kids was held at Swan Harbor Farm in Havre de Grace on January 10th. Despite the frigid temperatures, 16 kids and 12 parents participated and tallied a total of 31 species and 407 total birds. Dennis Kirkwood's "Frosty Fingers" team found the most - 18 species and 200 birds. Many thanks go to the field trip leaders Dennis Kirkwood, Phil Powers, Tim Houghton, and Ruth Bergstrom. Thanks also to Peggy Eppig for loaning the Agricultural Center to us, Mary Murray who helped with the binoculars, Jane Scocca at registration who also brought homemade cookies, and Fred Brundick our photographer. Sponsors also included Chesapeake Audubon, MAEF and Harford Glen.



## Field Trip Reports

### Cromwell Valley Country Park: October 19 2014

Five birders from Harford County and two from Baltimore met on a rather chilly and overcast October morning. The cool and rather dreary weather kept bird activity to a minimum for the first hour of birding and little was seen. As the day warmed and the sun came out bird activity increased and the result was a very successful morning's birding. An interesting mixture of resident birds, summer migrants leaving and winter migrant arrivals were observed; including, **American Kestrel**, **Merlin**, **Magnolia Warbler**, **Purple Finch**, **Winter Wren**, **Lincoln's Sparrow**, **Fox Sparrow** and both **kinglets**. Overall, 55 species were observed. ~ *David Larkin*

### Conowingo Gull/Eagle Watch January 17

Seven hearty participants came out to Conowingo on a clear and cold morning to enjoy the winter birdlife. As usual, dozens of **Bald Eagles** were present including 2 at the nest along the trail down river of the dam. Waterfowl were more numerous than usual with 8 species of ducks sighted, **Bufflehead** and **Common Goldeneye** being the most numerous. Several **Golden-crowned Kinglets** flashed their crowns for us and **Winter Wrens** scurried among the downed trees along the trail. Gulls were not in abundance as no water was being released by the dam. The morning ended with a total of 29 species. ~ *Dennis Kirkwood*

### Bradenbaugh Flats February 7

A cold morning couldn't keep 21 people from turning out for a trip to the World Famous Bradenbaugh Flats. Waterfowl were in good numbers at our first pond with a **Cackling Goose** hiding among the **Canada Geese** and **Hooded Mergansers**, **Ring-billed Ducks** and **American Black Ducks** also present. At the Flats, after watching a mature **Bald Eagle**, we found a large flock of **Horned Larks** with a possible **Lapland Longspur**. Unfortunately the flock dispersed before it could be confirmed. At Turney's Pond, 2 **Green-winged Teal** and an **American Wigeon** added to our waterfowl list. The trip finished at the leader's house with hot soup and bread. Our trip total was 31 species. ~ *Dennis Kirkwood*

# Harford Bird Club Field Trips

Field trip schedule compiled by Tom Gibson

**Feb. 28 (Sat.) – Promenade at Havre De Grace.** Meet the leaders at 9:00 AM at the parking lot for Tydings Park in Havre de Grace for a stroll along the Promenade and waterfront to look for wintering species including ducks, gulls, herons, etc. The walk will be followed by a lunch afterwards at the Laurrapin Grille. Contact Leaders Colleen Webster (410-459-4577; [cwebster@harford.edu](mailto:cwebster@harford.edu)) and Sue Procell (443-417-4919; [procellmd@gmail.com](mailto:procellmd@gmail.com)) ahead of time so they can make lunch reservations.

**March 7 (Sat.) – Emory Knoll Farms.** This trip offers a great chance to find a variety of late winter/early spring songbirds including Fox Sparrow, Pine Warbler and American Tree Sparrow. We will walk the gentle trails for about one mile at a leisurely pace. Meet at the 165/543 Park - and - Ride at 8:00 AM. The leader is Dennis Kirkwood (410-692-5905; [newarkfarms@gmail.com](mailto:newarkfarms@gmail.com)).

**March 11 (Wed.) – Timberdoodle Search.** Meet at 6:45 PM at the commuter lot at Rt.155 and I-95 and proceed to a nearby location that has produced fascinating American Woodcock activity as darkness begins to descend. Leading are Elaine Beery (410-272-6037; [ehbeery@yahoo.com](mailto:ehbeery@yahoo.com)) and Jane Scocca (410-272-8870; [jane@scocca.org](mailto:jane@scocca.org)).

**March 14 (Sat.) – Swan Harbor Farm Park.** This Harford County gem with three impoundments, a commanding view of the Chesapeake Bay, wooded trails, and open fields has developed into a fine location for a broad spectrum of birdlife including waterfowl, marsh specialties, raptors, and sparrows. Meet at 8:00 AM at the parking lot adjacent to the MD Agricultural Education Center at the end of the driveway. The leader is Josh Emm (410-937-6790; [apistopanchax@gmail.com](mailto:apistopanchax@gmail.com)).

**March 18 (Wed.) -- Timberdoodle Search.** Join this evening watch for one of our most interesting (and elusive!) birds, the American Woodcock, as it performs its mating sky dance. Meet at 7:00 PM at the Edgewood Home Depot on Rt.40 in the southwest corner of the parking lot. The leader is Phil Powers (410-679-4116; [birdsindmd@verizon.net](mailto:birdsindmd@verizon.net)).

**March 21 (Sat.) – Harford Waterfowl Tour.** Marvel at large rafts of scaup and search for species that are tough to find locally, such as Surf Scoter, Redhead, Long-tailed Duck, and Northern Shoveler. Beginners interested in learning the basics of waterfowl identification and

experienced watchers searching for rarities will enjoy this morning trip to the Gunpowder River and Havre de Grace. Scopes are helpful, although not necessary. Dress warmly and **must bring photo ID for entrance to APG.** Meet at 6:00 AM in the back lot of the McDonald's in Edgewood on Rt.40. Contact leader Dave Webb (410-939-3537; [porzana@comcast.net](mailto:porzana@comcast.net)) for trip details.

**March 28 (Sat) – Lapidum.** Look for gulls, lingering waterfowl and perhaps some early surprises with leaders Matt Hafner (410-971-3203; [hafner.matt@gmail.com](mailto:hafner.matt@gmail.com)) and Mark Magnani (410-838-1778; [mwmagnini@peoplepc.com](mailto:mwmagnini@peoplepc.com)). Additional sites in Susquehanna State Park may be visited. Meet at the Lapidum parking lot at the south end of SSP at 7:30 AM.

**April 11 (Sat.) -- Perryman Area.** Veteran leaders Phil Powers (410-679-4116; [birdsindmd@verizon.net](mailto:birdsindmd@verizon.net)) and Dave Larkin (410-569-8319; [dlarkin@towson.edu](mailto:dlarkin@towson.edu)) will take you on an expedition, driving to various locations in the Perryman area known to harbor interesting birdlife from Horned Larks and American Pipits to waterfowl and shorebirds. Depart from the Aberdeen WalMart parking lot (Rt.40) at 7:30 AM.

**April 18 (Sat.) – Harford Glen.** Meet at the Glen (west end of Wheel Rd) at 7:30 AM. We will begin this tour with sightings from the parking lot, then proceed to survey the triple riparian habitats of Atkisson Reservoir, the faster flowing Winter's Run, and the Plumtree Run tributary. The woodland trails and open meadows offer great opportunities for good birding. Ruth Bergstrom (443-752-1967; [ruthb22@yahoo.com](mailto:ruthb22@yahoo.com)) will be leading our trip.

**April 24 (Fri.) – Jerusalem Mill.** Visit this appealing stretch of the Little Gunpowder River marking Harford County's western border. Meet at the mill on Jerusalem Rd. (off Rt.152) at 7:30 AM. Leader is Phil Powers (410-679-4116; [birdsindmd@verizon.net](mailto:birdsindmd@verizon.net)).

**April 25 (Sat.) – Susquehanna State Park.** An ideal time to enjoy emerging wildflowers, early migrant songbirds, and lingering winter visitors. Meet at the parking area at the confluence of Deer Creek and the Susquehanna River just north of Rock Run Mill at 8:30 AM. The leaders are Colleen Webster (410-459-4577; [cwebster@harford.edu](mailto:cwebster@harford.edu)) and Sue Procell (443-417-4919; [procellmd@gmail.com](mailto:procellmd@gmail.com)).





## 51st Annual Rock Run Christmas Bird Count

On Saturday, December 27, 2014, we were treated to a pleasant, sunny winter day with a low temperature of 30°F at sunrise that would eventually warm to a balmy 52°F by midday. Inland streams, ponds, lakes and impoundments were all open, and the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay flats were like glass most of the day. A total of 39 counters made up our hearty CBC crew, covering 12 of our 15 sectors.

The Rock Run CBC team tallied 96 species (plus 2 additional “count week” species) for a grand total of 177,042 individuals. Unlike last year, this year did include a “mega” blackbird flock of approximately 150,000 individuals significantly adding to our individual total. Without the blackbird flock, our roughly 27,000 birds fell well below our 4-year average of approximately 42,000 individuals per year. All continuing sectors did see a drop in species variety this year, except for Palmer SP. **Canada Geese** were down by nearly 10,000 individuals compared to the last two years. This year did see an explosion of **Ruddy Ducks**, whereas all other duck species, especially diving ducks, were down from a year ago. Both eagles and gulls were recorded at about a half of their normal numbers. Winter “irruptives” were mostly missing this year, however, a few individuals were recorded.

However, on the positive side, we had one Rock Run CBC first-timer; **Virginia Rail** — two to be exact! Both individuals were recorded from the main impoundment at Swan Harbor. Equally impressive were our two second-timers: a single **Dunlin** on the Susquehanna Flats and three **Common Ravens** in Perryman. Many of our regularly occurring woodland and field winter birds were found in normal numbers, and the addition of **Rusty Blackbird**, **Eastern Meadowlark** and **House Wren** rounded out the land birding nicely. It was an exceptionally good sparrow year with most species increasing by nearly a factor of two. Of our two Count Week birds, **Greater White-fronted Goose** had been recorded on the Rock Run CBC a few times before; the other, **White-winged Scoter**, never. So close!

Special thanks to Mark Johnson and Dave Webb, et al., for putting together an impromptu “tally rally” in Havre de Grace afterwards. Highlights were as follows:

**Colora: (37 species)** Tom Congersky, Rupert and Cynthia Rossetti and Lee Peterson. Tom and company recorded high counts for **Blue Jay** (36), **White-breasted Nuthatch** (30) and **American Goldfinch** (150). They also

received the Golden Goose award for recording a high for **Canada Geese** with 2,001.

**Bainbridge: (37species)** Brian Moyer. Long-time count expert Brian covered his home turf of Bainbridge again where he recorded a high for the aerial-pleasing **Bonaparte’s Gull** with 19. Brian was also one of two sectors recording **Cackling Goose** and **American Kestrel**.

**Perry Point: (54 species)** Tom and Debbie Trafton, Greg Huffman, Mark Daily, John Hughes. Tom and his crack team found three **Common Ravens**; only the second time this easterly wandering species has been recorded on our count. In addition, they found our only **American Wigeon**, **Red-Breasted Merganser** and **Gray Catbird** this year. The Perry Point Team also recorded a high for **Tufted Titmouse** with 24.

**Swan Creek: (62 species)** Dave Ziolkowski. Many “Thanks” to Dave for bringing Swan Creek back on line this year. And what a sector it turned out to be. Dave found our only **Killdeer**, **House Wren**, **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, **Rusty Blackbirds** and **Pine Siskins**. In addition to having recorded three owl species, Dave had highs for **Hermit Thrush** (4), **Winter Wren** (9), **Carolina Chickadee** (45) and both **Song** and **White-throated Sparrows**.

**Havre de Grace: (64 species)** Rick Cheicante, Dave Larkin, Peter Lev, Jack Fuller and John Gallo. You kind of expect Swan Harbor to produce something nice if you go there. Well, two first-time **Virginia Rails** certainly surprised and delighted the counters. This sector also had the count’s only **Wild Turkey** and **White-crowned Sparrow**. High counts included **Pied-billed Grebe** (14), **Herring Gull** (75), **Great Black-backed Gull** (57), **Horned Lark** (12), **Savannah Sparrow** (20) and **American Tree Sparrow** (3).

**Aldino: (38 species)** Phil Powers, John Taylor, Jane Scocca, Amanda Koss, Ruth Eisenhour. Phil and his team must have had a little early spring fever when they recorded our only **Eastern Phoebe**. They also had a high count for **Turkey Vulture** (54) and were one of two counts identifying and recording **Cackling Goose**. Very nice!

**Susquehanna: (49 species)** Mark Johnson, Bob Werrlein. Mark and Bob once again covered one of Harford’s favorite birding spots, Susquehanna SP. They had the only **Common Goldeneye** recorded and had highs for **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (8), **Brown Creeper** (8) and **Field Sparrow** (8). As a small royalty for their effort, they also had highs for **Golden-crowned** (8) and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** (4).

**Rolling Green: (53 species)** Dave Webb, Jean Wheeler, Matt Anthony, Ann Helton, Bill Burchett, Joe and Melody Stevens. Veteran leaders Dave and Jean again fielded a diverse team and came up with the count's only **Red-breasted Nuthatch**. They had high counts for **Great Horned Owl** (9), **Mourning Dove** (86), **Eastern Bluebird** (29), **American Robin** (160), **Cedar Waxwing** (56) and **Eastern Meadowlark** (2). For the second year in a row, Dave, Jean and the group won the coveted Rock, Pigeon, Scissors Award with a high of 150 birds.

**Palmer SP: (41 species)** Ruth Bergstrom, Mary Murray. For the second year, Ruth and Mary have made Palmer SP their CBC home and as a result, were the only team/sector with an increase in species total from a year ago. Way to go! They once again tallied our only **Chipping Sparrows**. They were the only count to have all three: **Cooper's** and **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and **American Kestrel**.

**Dublin/Berkley: (38 species)** Alicia Farrell, Patricia Farrell. This year, Alicia took on a new territory, and in part, it doubled as some family time. They were rewarded with the count's only **Merlin**. In addition, Alicia and Patricia recorded highs for **Gadwall** (17) and **Canvasback** (5).

**Conowingo Dam: (22 species)** Colleen Webster, Sue Procell. Colleen and Sue took on Conowingo Dam and the Wildflower Trail from Conowingo south. They recorded highs for **American Black Duck** (17), **Great Blue**

**Heron** (41) and **Ring-billed Gull** (2,077). Conowingo would not be complete without highs for **Black Vulture** (208) and ... **Bald Eagle** (42).

**Susquehanna River/Flats: (49 species)** Dennis Kirkwood, Peter Jay, Diane Jones. Dennis and crew once again navigated the grand Susquehanna River and adjacent flats. They found our only **Lesser Scaup** on the count and an exceptional second-timer: a single **Dunlin**. They also reported highs for **Mallard** (155), **Bufflehead** (62), **Common Merganser** (47), **Ruddy Duck** (298), **Black-crowned Night-Heron** (7) and **American Coot** (140).



"Thanks" to all of our participants for another wonderful Rock Run CBC.

Rick Cheicante  
CBC Count Coordinator

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**The Harford Bird Club Dinner Reservation Form**

Please cut and mail the bottom portion of this page to Johanne Henrickson, 2014 Tiffany Terrace, Forest Hill, MD 21050 by Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 if you plan on attending.

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of adults (at \$13.00 each)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children 16 and under (at \$5.00 each)



Please make checks payable to Harford County MOS.

Print your name(s) above as you would like it to appear on your name tag!

Include address and phone number if you would like transportation to the meeting.

TEL: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



# Harford Bird Club March Meeting



## "Japan — Cranes, Owls, and Snow Monkeys"

by

Jean Wheeler

Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>

Dinner - 6:15pm - General Meeting time 7:15pm

Location: Churchville Presbyterian Church

2844 Churchville Road

Churchville, MD 21028



Mail To:

If unable to deliver, please return to:  
Madeline Lovera  
2068 Brandy Drive  
Forest Hill, MD 21050

