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## BRING BACK THE BIRDS

**R**This spring especially, I noticed the birds. What a joy! Birds and vaccines - early signs of hope. First I noticed just a few species, and then more - chickadees, swallows, cardinals, jay, woodpeckers, nuthatches. I noticed their calls - the familiar and sometimes something unexpected. Since I'm still working remotely as a result of the pandemic, I am noticing more of the life happening in my yard. Or is it really 'my' yard? This idea of ownership is rather vainglorious - as if we are the only species that matters, and that the animals are visitors. I think we might actually have it backwards. Before we claimed this land for our own, it had a much more diverse species mix - perhaps as forest, meadow, or wetland - with hundreds or thousands of native plants supporting billions of insects. Then we came and tamed - first as agricultural land, and later as suburbs - taking the great complexity of species and reducing it to a few dominant cultivars - pavement and lawn - with some native or non-native 'accessory' plants and trees.

And so what does this have to do with birds? Well - for starters - according to an estimate published in the journal Science in 2019, North America has lost more than a quarter of our entire bird population - over 3 billion birds - since 1970<sup>1</sup>. It's likely a result of a complex mix of factors - habitat degradation and loss, pesticide use, increasing light pollution (hint: dark skies are important for proper rest, breeding, migration and in some cases, predation, for birds!). But one clear need for bird survival is proper habitat and food. Sure, bird feeders are great, but did



Illustration by Pat Leonard from 3billionbirds.org

you know that almost all birds rely on insects, not seeds, to feed their young? And that native plants and trees support far more insects than most introduced species? It turns out, lawns are practically biological dead zones, especially when sprayed with pesticides.

Birds are part of the ecological foundation on which all life depends, and they function as environmental warning systems (reminder: we just lost 3 billion...). They interact with their environments in ways that aren't always immediately understood or appreciated and they can have a deep impact on human and natural resources. For example, birds

have important roles in pest control, plant pollination, animal carcass removal, seed dispersal, ecosystem maintenance, nutrient exchange, and even coral reef fertilization. They also provide a sense of place, heighten appreciation of nature, and of course, attract and inspire birdwatchers around the world. Native birds and pollinators increase the stability and productivity of our ecosystems; yet they cannot survive without connected corridors of habitat along their entire migratory range, and especially at their winter and summer endpoints. Refuges and parks cannot sustain many bird populations sufficiently - the entire system is dependent on the choices that we make in our own yards.

When I look out on my yard, I now realize I have some work to do! I don't want to 'own' my yard - I want it to sustain more than just my own pleasure - I want to become more of a conscious and conscientious steward for the nature that surrounds

me. I'm only beginning to realize what that means. But fortunately, there are small, simple steps we can all begin to take: Spraying and mowing less frequently (once every two weeks rather than once per week in the summer) better supports pollinators; adding just a few additional native plants, shrubs, or trees to your yard; minimizing nighttime lights; and, of course, providing fresh water and seed (pesticide-free, if possible!), especially during migration seasons (spring and fall) can all help. And there are even more opportunities to make consumer choices that can help. For more ideas on how to sustain bird and other life in your yard, check out <https://www.3billionbirds.org/> or <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>, or check out Doug Tallamy's excellent books *Bringing Nature Home* and *Nature's Best Hope*. ■

by Sarah Hines

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.3billionbirds.org/>



Infographic from [3billionbirds.org](https://www.3billionbirds.org/)

## SEEKING GARDENER OR NATURALIST FOR CATONSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN

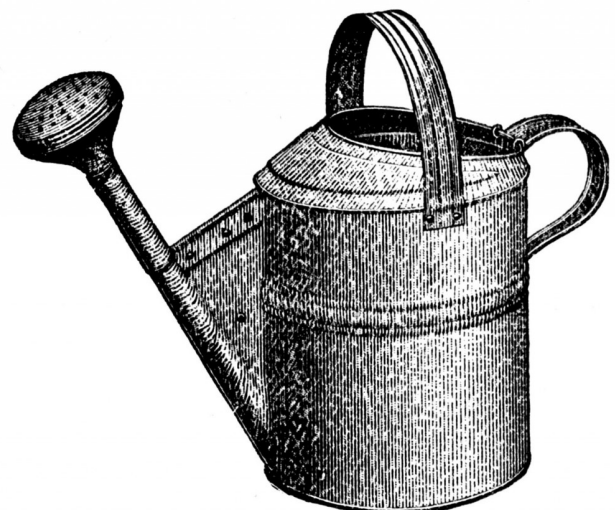
Catonsville Presbyterian is seeking a person or two to help with an assessment of the current rehabilitation project of the Presbyterian/Hillcrest Woodlands.

We also need to develop a plan for moving forward to establish a sustainable place for learning, fun, and relaxation.

Are you a Master Naturalist or Master Gardener? An experienced gardener with an interested in helping?

Please contact Ron Gunderson, Catonsville Presbyterian, [cinron.md@gmail.com](mailto:cinron.md@gmail.com). ■

by Ron Gunderson, Creation Care Team,  
Catonsville Presbyterian  
[cinron.md@gmail.com](mailto:cinron.md@gmail.com)



## OPEN AIR DINING IN EC

If you are covid cautious, as I am, you might still prefer to dine outdoors when you go out to eat. Or, you just might prefer eating outdoors. Fortunately, there is a good variety of local outdoor dining options. Once you tire of going to Chef Paolino's, Jennings, State Fare, and the limited outdoor seating at the 818, you can find a variety of good outdoor options in Ellicott City.

**Breakfast/Brunch:** the Little Market Café is your best option, and that is not entirely due to the make-over advice from chef Gordon Ramsey. It's owner and friendly staff have always been an asset. The coffee is of high quality and there are several delicious items on their food menu. One testimony to their popularity is their occasional lines at the ordering window. Their wide variety of seating options (sun/shade, benches/chairs, various views, etc.) is a major asset, with great people watching entertainment and low key music starting around 11 on Sundays.

Also worthy of note is the Old Mill Café on our side of the river. The coffee there is as excellent as is their food. The outdoor seating there is not quite as charming as the Little Market Café but their staffing is great. Their limited indoor seating is well spaced out.

Syriana has been a favorite of mine for new and rewarding food experiences. I also recommend trying their Syrian coffee heated in sand. They suffer the disadvantage of not opening before 11 or 12, so maybe this place is more for lunch than brunch. Their outdoor seating in front of the shop is a bit too much in the walkway for me but their tables up in the rocks next to the shop are very pleasant, and offer the best people watching views in EC.



Photo from Phoenix Upper Main

**Lunch/Dinner:** The absolute best outdoor seating in EC is at Umi, on Main Street. It arguably offers the best food as well, at least if you like sushi and sashimi. The outdoor seating is reached through a circuitous route that feels like a secret passage. But you finally emerge into a charming setting that feels surprisingly bucolic, overlooking the Tiber "River". The seating behind the shop next door (upstream) is best. I recommend reservations, as it can fill up even on some weekdays. The sushi skeptics can find other good options on the menu.

The New Phoenix has just now rolled out its first brew and it is very good. There are also some excellent guest microbrews on tap. I preferred the high tables in the alley beside the restaurant, but there is more of an Oktoberfest atmosphere under the tent in the back if you go in the late evening. Not open for lunch (yet?). Pam and I made an early light dinner for two out of their nacho appetizer which has Chile and lots of other stuff on it and almost requires a spoon to eat.

The Manor Hill Tavern has a beer garden nestled between the Old Columbia Pike and the Tiber. The atmosphere under the tent feels cave like, which is not necessarily a negative. They offer some solid microbrews and a limited food menu. You'll need to cross Old Columbia Pike to use a bathroom, which could prove challenging after a few beers. And, their web page says "All alcohol ordered at the Beer Garden must be consumed before leaving." So, drink up! ■

by Larry Wilt



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Lauren Houghton  
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or 410-491-5464  
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cats, reptiles and fish.

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is 443 833 2062.  
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Isabella Landriscina  
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Sam Stein  
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Rose Ocone  
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Aidan Drews  
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## LURMAN THEATER SCHEDULE

See the shows here:

<http://www.lurman.com/concerts/2021>

Sat July 10 6-8 PM Speakers of  
the House - Old-School Fun, Boogaloo &  
Rock  
<http://speakersofthehouseband.com>

Sun July 11 6-8 PM Soul Crackers  
Soul, Motown & 70' Funk  
<http://www.soulcrackers.net>

Sat July 17 6-8 PM Shades of Blue  
Greatest Area Big-Band Music  
<http://www.shades-of-blue.com/>

Sun July 18 6-8 PM Carey Ziegler's  
Expensive Hobby - Rare, Classic Rock  
<http://www.expensivehobby.com/>

Sat July 24 6-8 PM Crush  
High-Energy Party Band  
<http://www.crushbandrocks.com/>

Sun July 25 6-8 PM Arty Hill  
Modern Honky-Tonk & Country  
<http://www.artyhill.com/V3/>

Sat July 31 6-8 PM Broke Rich  
Boys - Acoustic Rock & Country  
<http://thebrokerichboys.com>

Sun August 01 6-8 PM Magical Mys-  
tery Girls - Female Beatles Tribute Band  
[http://www.magicalmysterygirls.com/in-  
dex.html](http://www.magicalmysterygirls.com/in-<br/>dex.html)

Sat August 07 6-8 PM Different Sis-  
ters - Classic Rock, R&B & Country  
<http://www.differentsisters.rocks/>

Sun August 08 6-8 PM Junkyard Saints  
New Orleans Funk, Latin & Swing  
<http://www.junkyard saints.com/>

Sat August 14 6-8 PM Remains of  
Radio - Classic Rock to Today's Tunes  
[https://www.mdparty.com/performers/de-  
fault?id=13325&print=yes](https://www.mdparty.com/performers/de-<br/>fault?id=13325&print=yes)

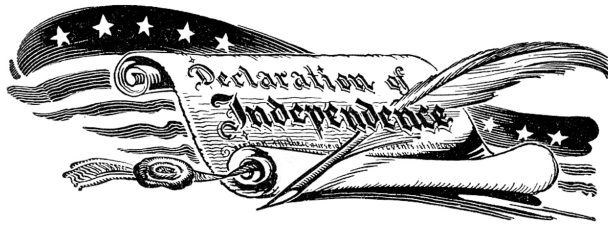
Sun August 15 6-8 PM Texas Chain-  
saw Horns - Horn-Driven Blues, Funk &  
Soul  
<http://texaschainsawhorns.com/>

Sat August 21 5-7 PM Diamond Alley  
Dance Rock & Variety Band  
<http://diamondalley.com/>

Sun August 22 5-7 PM Second Hand  
News - Fleetwood Mac Tribute Band  
[https://www.facebook.com/secondhand-  
newsannapolis/](https://www.facebook.com/secondhand-<br/>newsannapolis/)

Sat August 28 5-7 PM Code Red  
Exciting, High-Energy Rock  
<http://www.coderedmd.com>

Sun August 29 5-7 PM Technicolor  
Motor Home - 10-pc Steely Dan Tribute  
Band  
<http://www.technicolormotorhome.com> ■



## SUPPORT THE CATONSVILLE PARADE & FIREWORKS

See the schedule of events here <http://www.catonsvillecelebrations.org/schedule-of-events/>

Volunteers are going door-to-door in the Catonsville area to collect donations. Give generously!

Parade Collectors with buckets will be walking down the parade route just ahead of the parade. Bring your cash/ checks and deposit them into their buckets.

Fireworks Collectors will be traversing the high school grounds at the pre-fireworks fun fest. Give generously!

Write a check payable to the Catonsville 4th of July Committee and mail to P.O. Box 21202 Catonsville, MD 21228. Donations are tax-deductible.

Make a donation online using your credit card through the security of PayPal at <http://www.catonsvillecelebrations.org/support-us/> Give generously!

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# CATONSVILLE ICE CREAM REVIEW

## Objective

To identify the best ice cream (or other frozen treat) spot within walking distance of OCNA. We sacrificed our waist - and a bit of our wallets – to take on this mission. But we did it in service of our neighbors so they can make the most of the seasonal treat options available.

## Method

- Determine the candidates. We decided on the following local establishments:
  - The Greenery Creamery
  - Opie’s
  - Rita’s
  - Sweet Frog
  - Tastee Zone
- Establish evaluation criteria.
  - Each person had a particular item that they tested at each place, where possible. John got vanilla with chocolate jimmies (or similar) and Kim always got a specialty item.
  - Mostly consider taste but also factor in price, and service when testing options.
  - Sample each other’s options

## Results

### Best Soft Serve: Opie’s

- Location: 1603 Edmondson Ave
- Review notes: the ice cream is the creamiest and most delicious, the price is reasonable, and the service is good - they know how to keep the line moving!

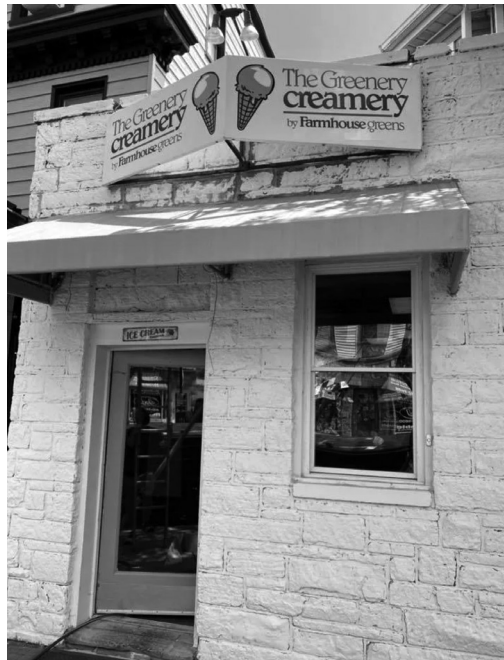


Photo from Greenery Creamery



Photo from Opies

- Insider’s tip: Try their Dad’s Cookies ice cream sandwich.

### Best Snowball: Tastee Zone

- Location: 1715 Edmondson Ave
- Review notes: the texture of the ice is good (more shaved than crunchy which helps the syrup soak in better), and the syrup flavors seem to be better quality.
- Insider’s tip: Get your snowball with the marshmallow cream topping.

### Best Scooped: Greenery Creamery

- Location: 821 Frederick Rd
- Review notes: true craftsmanship goes into this ice cream and it’s made fresh each week, plus there are some really delicious dairy free options.
- Insider’s tip: only open Thu-Sun, follow them on Facebook for their flavors for the weekend and sundae specials.

### Honorable Mentions

- Sweet Frog: frozen yogurt, LOTS of options for topping, priced by weight.
- Rita’s: frozen custard, mix-ins and snowball options. ■

by John & Kim Marshall




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by Ann Quinn



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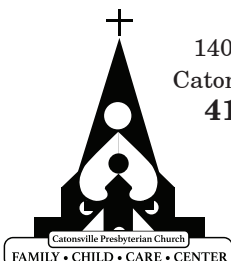
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