

# Smoke Signal



MOYAONE  
ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER

MOYAONE RESERVE @ PISCATAWAY PARK

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

August 2025

## President's Message

Over the last few months, we've had a number of questions as to whether the Moyaone Association is a Homeowners' Association (HOA). This has been regarding if we can "make people pay" the consolidated fee or upon seeing listings for properties that have come up for sale in the Moyaone Reserve. As this can be confusing and nuanced, I asked John Mitchell to help break down the legalese. A big thank you to John and we hope that you find the below helpful.

Karen Bell

Moyaone President

## HOA? No way! We are way better!

The Moyaone Association is not now, nor ever will be, an HOA. That's a good thing. We are a voluntary association of homeowners – and landowners, and renters. And that's a very good thing.

You may have heard comments suggesting that we should become an "HOA" – a "Homeowners Association" as defined in the Maryland Homeowners Association Act, which is involuntary: "Wouldn't it be great if Moyaone Reserve home owners were forced to pay just like HOA members?" "Our dues would be lower because more people would be sharing the load."

If we are not an HOA, what are we? Listings of Moyaone Reserve properties suggest even realtors aren't sure what to say about us. Some say there is "no HOA," while others list our consolidated fee as an "HOA fee." The standard listing doesn't have a place to say "voluntary association that is way better than an HOA."

But let's be clear: there is no way we could ever become an HOA. HOAs are formed by the developer to maintain uniform standards protecting the look and feel of the development. Some may prohibit chickens or goats, or demand that you maintain your lawn a certain way. HOA approval may be needed to build an addition, even if you comply with county regulations. Such restrictions are legally enforceable by the HOA. Fees are mandatory, and special assessments can be added.

The simple answer is that we cannot become an HOA as a matter of law. The more interesting answer is that we have something far better.

In contrast to HOA covenants that focus on maintaining uniformity and property values, oblivious to the community beyond the HOA, the covenants in the scenic easements to which our homes are subject were crafted independent of any developer's aesthetic and stand without regard to whatever zoning changes local authorities might be coaxed into making. They were established through an Act of Congress. The agreement is not one forced upon purchasers by a developer, but rather, are agreements with the American People, acting through the National Park Service. These covenants apply to all Moyaone Reserve properties regardless whether the owners choose to join the Moyaone Association. The Association cannot fine you or place a lien on your property for noncompliance. The federal government enforces them.

The HOA's purpose is to maintain property values and common areas within the development rather than on fostering a positive sense of community or common purpose, or looking after the greater good. Here is where the Moyaone Association's purpose stands out with a vision far beyond what any HOA would have. As our Bylaws state:

*The purpose of the Association shall be to promote and protect the interests of the **residents** of the Moyaone Reserve **and surrounding area in sustaining the community's rural character, historic identity, environmental values and the local ecosystem.***

See that? We are an association of "residents" and not just "homeowners." People who rent Moyaone reserve homes, or who own unimproved land within the Moyaone Reserve, can be associate members, sharing in that vision. And our focus extends beyond the Moyaone Reserve itself to include the surrounding area. Plus, we aren't just sustaining property values, but sustaining our rural character, history, environmental value and local ecosystem. No HOA has ever been able to claim that.

Our Bylaws go on to call out specific activities that are consonant with that purpose:

1. ***Safeguarding the system of deed covenants and scenic easements affecting properties in the Moyaone Reserve and nearby areas through information, education, and advocacy.***

2. **Implementing appropriate measures to uphold and protect the open-space rural character of the Mount Vernon viewshed and its significant environmental resources and historic values.**
3. **As necessary and appropriate, working in cooperation with other nonprofit organizations and governmental bodies to develop and implement programs to achieve the above.**
4. **Providing programs and services that benefit the cultural, educational, and recreational interests of Association members and, as feasible, of the larger community.**
5. **Strive to maintain critical Association infrastructure of gravel roads in compliance with agreed upon standards.**

I challenge you to find an HOA that has such an expansive view of “community” that seeks to maintain and improve not only our own quality of life but also that of the broader community around us, or that seeks to cooperate with other organizations outside of the Moyaone Reserve, and even government entities.

Unlike any HOA, we enjoy the support of thousands who are not members – people who participate in supporting our pool through their seasonal memberships and swimming lessons; the Prince George’s County Council that gives tax breaks to those of us in the County on account of the broader benefit derived from our scenic easements; the Alice Ferguson Foundation, Hard Bargain Farm, and Accokeek Foundation, with which we regularly partner in support of these initiatives that are much broader than just the commercial value of a house.

I challenge you to find an HOA that relies on volunteers as much as we do. We use volunteer labor to maintain our roads, operate the pool, mow the lawn, clear storm damage blocking access, maintaining our community center, and building the cookshack, pavilion and tiki bar. Instead of a management company charging us a huge fee, we conduct our own operations through very active committees of volunteers. When it’s time to cover the pool and put things away for the winter, we don’t just hire a company; we have a party with volunteers.

We also like each other’s company – no HOA can match the number and size of the social events we have here. When Betty and I discovered the Moyaone Reserve and began looking for a home, we had soon gained far more friends and gone to far more social events than during the previous 20 years living under an HOA, and that was before we even bought a house here. We were not just buying a property – we were buying into a vibrant and diverse community of interesting people whose company we enjoy and who embrace the Moyaone Association’s altruistic purpose, protected from developers by the federal scenic easements.

Even though we cannot force everyone to belong to the Moyaone Association, we have an Association that most of us willingly choose to belong to.

John Mitchell

Moyaone Vice President

# Upcoming Events

## **August 9**

Outdoor Movie Night Under the Stars @ Moyaone Commons Field, 2311 Bryan Point Road

## **August 15**

Accokeek Artists Alliance ink making workshop

## **September 13, 9am-2pm**

Charles County Youth Orchestra auditions  
@ Christ Church, La Plata

## **September 21**

Accokeek Artists Alliance general meeting

## **September 21, 5pm**

Moo-velous Milking Discoveries @ Hard Bargain Farm (details below)

## **October 4**

Pinot on the Potomac (details below)

## **October 18**

Accokeek Artists Alliance wreath-making workshop (registration open)

## **November 15th & 16th, 5:30pm**

Twilight Treats & Trails (details below)

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## From the Association

### **From the Editor**

As you may know, I took over as the editor for Smoke Signals a few months ago. Between learning the ropes, transitioning the newsletter to distribution through the website, and generally trying to keep up with such an active community, it's been a lot!

So, I'm looking for a volunteer to help me out– either someone to help on a monthly basis with a recurring task or two, or someone to occasionally tag in as editor if I need a month off!

WordPress experience is a plus (especially since it is my *least* favorite part of the job...)

Please email me at [news@moyaone.org](mailto:news@moyaone.org) if you're interested!

Julia Paajanen

## **Pulse of the Pool**

We are over halfway through the summer pool season which starts with Memorial Day and ends with Labor Day. July 4<sup>th</sup> sort of marks the middle. Each holiday the community gathers at the Commons for a social and potluck. Spending time at the pool and Commons is a wonderful way to reconnect and get acquainted with your neighbors. Everyone socializes differently, there's space for all – you can get dressy and be front/center, you can work on a cause, or connect to share pastimes, or you may prefer to hover in the background and just soak up the vibes. We hope you'll venture out before and for Labor Day.

We'd like to share a message about Buildings & Grounds. The landscaping around the Commons is critical for maintaining a safe and aesthetic destination for all patrons. To keep our costs down, the Association has electric lawn equipment, and our community members take turns lending a hand (and even nicer equipment at times) to mow the lawns, weed whack around fixtures & shrubs and leaf blow the hard surfaces, walks and deck. If you can spare some time, please consider performing one of these tasks this summer, particularly, before a summer holiday or event. Questions - contact John Hollyfield at [hollyfield1@comcast.net](mailto:hollyfield1@comcast.net).

After Labor Day we will be scheduling work parties to start the process of closing and winterizing the pool. The first work party is scheduled for September 13<sup>th</sup>, more details to come. We need at least two dozen strong hands to put the pool cover on. We expect to start construction on the locker rooms this fall, so the deck furniture will have to be cleaned, dried, and stowed somewhere out of the way.

I am happy to report that we have been using the new payment portal on the MA website to collect membership and other pool fees (see pool's QR code). Besides encouraging youth to join the Accokeek Swim Team (great job, Gators, for their 5-0 season!), we offer swim lessons and water aerobics. Private lessons are priced at \$20/30 mins; \$25/45 mins; and \$30/60 mins. For details, stop by the Front Desk at the pool, 2311 Bryan Point Road.



Special thanks to our Pool Manager Kyla Amelechkin who will be returning to college at the end of the month. Kyla has been instrumental in making day-to-day pool operations as smooth as the clear, blue water she helps maintain. She understands the needs of AST, the early morning swim birds, the recreational crowd and the youth day camps. From staffing & scheduling to implementing new processes, Kyla has demonstrated her ability to serve all the pool's member groups. Kyla, once a Gator herself, also remains involved with the swim team.

Major kudos also to our stellar 2025 guard staff including: Assistant Manager Warren Weber, Maya Civil, Charlene Drennen, Jude Bennett, Shea Oakes, Ashley Gruwell, Axel Naar, Asha Brown, Scarlett Vincent, and Luke & Micah Doyal.

Our guest policy, main season schedule, hours and weather- or maintenance-related info/updates can be found online and are posted at the Front Desk. If you have any questions, comments or feedback, email [pool@moyaone.org](mailto:pool@moyaone.org). Happy summer, and be well!

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7:30 - 9 a.m.		Adult Lap Swim	Adult Lap Swim	Adult Lap Swim	Adult Lap Swim	Adult Lap Swim	<b>[Home Swim Meet]</b>
→	9:30-11a.m. Adult Lap Swim	9-11a.m. Swim Team		9-11a.m. Swim Team		9-11a.m. Swim Team	9:30-11a.m. Adult Lap Swim
→	11a.m.-8p.m. Family Recreation (1 lap lane)	12-8p.m. Family Recreation (1 lap lane)	12-4:30p.m. Family Recreation (1 lap lane)	12-8p.m. Family Recreation (1 lap lane)	12-4:30p.m. Family Recreation (1 lap lane)	12-8p.m. Family Recreation (1 lap lane)	11a.m.-8p.m. Family Recreation (1 lap lane)

→			4:30-7p.m. Swim Team in 4 lanes and Family Recreation in 2 lanes		4:30-7p.m. Swim Team in 4 lanes and Family Recreation in 2 lanes		
8 - 9 p.m.			Adult Swim		Adult Swim		

*Pool hours are subject to change.*

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## From your Neighbors



"Uprooted"  
Watercolor by Frances Taylor

### Vegan Eating Group Bi-Monthly Potluck

Bastille Day was the theme at the July potluck, hosted by Sheryl Romeo and Matt Schwaller. We celebrated with crepes, conversation, and French 75 cocktails. The next potluck will be in September—stay tuned for date and location to be announced in the September issue. Contact us at [moyaoneveg@gmail.com](mailto:moyaoneveg@gmail.com) to join the email list.



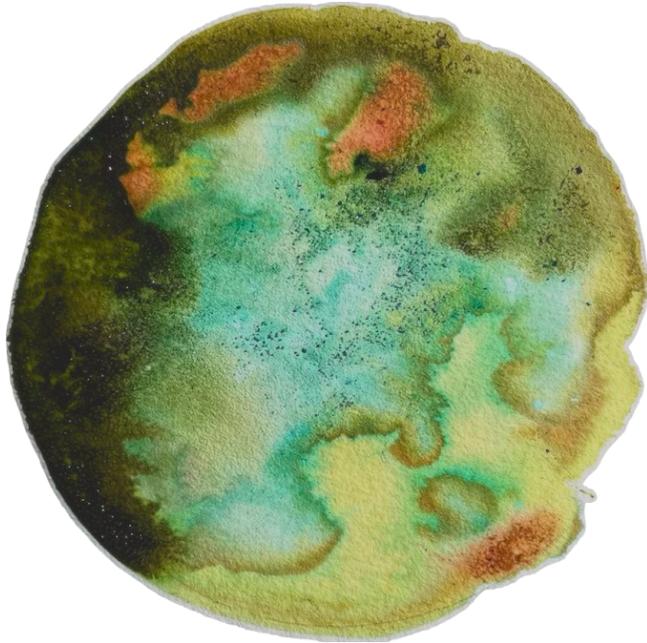
## Accokeek Swim Team

Congratulations to our All-Star swimmers, breaking records!

- In the 15-18 50m fly, Josef Shotwell broke Skip Blair's 1981 record (28.08) with a time of 27.23.
- Esladore Shotwell decided that breaking the 9-10 freestyle record once wasn't enough, so she did it again, breaking her own record with a 35.45!
- In a little sibling rivalry, Josef Shotwell took back with a 32.36 the 15-18 breaststroke record that his brother, Johannes, took from him earlier this summer (34.19). Josef ages out this year, so he wanted to leave his mark!
- In the 9-10 25m backstroke, Patrick Loftus broke Chris Butler's 1980 record (18.60) with a time of 18.48!
- Josef Shotwell made his mark again in the 15-18 100m IM, swimming a 1:05.84 to break Skip Blair's 1981 record (1:06.57)!
- And the girls freestyle relay did it again, lowering their 2:11.84 time to 2:08.22!



Accokeek Artists Alliance (AAA) has an ink making workshop with Candace Bigelow coming up on August 16th. This registration is closed, but those signed up are looking forward to finding a new use for what's already growing all around us.



Registration for a Fall wreath making workshop with the amazing florist Patrick Heydt on October 18th is now open. Our next general meeting of the AAA, which will involve sharing and swapping, will be on September 21st. We are making plans now to repeat our popular Winter Market, which will take place November 21 and 22 at the Wagner Center – so mark your calendars! Join AAA or sign up for a workshop on our website at [accokeekartistsalliance.com](http://accokeekartistsalliance.com)



### **Pinot on the Potomac Tickets On Sale Now!**

Tickets are officially LIVE for Pinot on the Potomac – our signature fall celebration, on Saturday, October 4 from 3-7 PM!

Join us for an unforgettable afternoon at the Alice Ferguson Foundation, complete with unlimited wine tastings, delicious local fare, sweeping river views, and a mission that matters.

>>> Explore ticket and meal options now: [www.fergusonfoundation.org/pinot](http://www.fergusonfoundation.org/pinot)

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*Proceeds directly support our educational programming providing children with experiences to discover the outdoors and appreciate nature.*

Let's raise a glass to nature, community, and impact. We can't wait to see you there!



**PINOT ON THE POTOMAC**  
Let's raise a glass for environmental education!

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW!**

Unlimited Wine Tastings  
Delicious Local Fare

Beautiful Potomac Views  
One Great Cause!

Saturday 3 - 7 PM  
**10.04.25**

**BUY TICKETS**  
[fergusonfoundation.org/pinot](http://fergusonfoundation.org/pinot)

## Join us for Fall Outdoor Experiences



We have some exciting adventures in nature coming this fall! Perfect for families, nature lovers, and anyone looking to explore all that nature has to offer.

**Moo-velous Milking Discoveries: Sept. 21st at 5pm**

Set against the picturesque backdrop of Hard Bargain Farm, this Experience is led by our fabulous farm staff who will take you through the milking process, Rosie's daily routine, her nutritional needs, and the importance of sustainable farming practices. Always wanted to milk a cow? Now's your chance, in this udderly unique, hands-on experience.

### **Twilight Treats & Trails: Nov. 15th & 16th at 5:30pm**

Explore the wonders of the outdoors under a canopy of stars in this unique night Experience. Our guides will take you on a nature hike along the Foundation's wet meadow boardwalk and wooded trails, ending with a cozy campfire and delicious s'mores. Join us in discovering the beauty of nature as the day turns to night.

>>> [Book your adventure here!](#) <<<

### **Now Hiring Part Time Positions at the Alice Ferguson Foundation**

Do you love being in nature? Share your love of the outdoors with the youth of today! We're hiring part-time environmental educators for the upcoming school year. Learn more and [apply here](#).

Love the outdoors and don't mind getting your hands a little dirty? We're hiring for part-time, paid farm hand positions to help with light farm chores like feeding animals and keeping our barnyard tidy. Morning and evening shifts are available. If you're interested, please email Elizabeth Johnson, Operations Director, at [ejohnson@fergusonfoundation.org](mailto:ejohnson@fergusonfoundation.org).



### **Auditions for 2025-26 Season**

Auditions for the 2025-2026 season of the Charles County Youth Orchestra will be held September 13 from 9:00 am to 2 pm at Christ Church, La Plata. All levels and instruments, except piano, are warmly encouraged to audition! Information, audition requirements, and sign-ups can be found at the Charles County Youth Orchestra website:

<https://www.charlescountyouthorchestra.org/auditions>

CCYO has four ensembles: Prelude Strings for beginning string players, Encore Strings and Encore Band for intermediate level players and the Charles County Youth Orchestra for advanced musicians. The membership fee for any of the groups is \$185 for the year. Averaging less than \$6 per week, it's very affordable and financial aid is also available. CCYO students come from St. Mary's County, Prince Georges County, and Calvert County, as well as Charles County.

CCYO presents two large concerts and six smaller concerts each year, a two-week Chamber Music Festival with four additional chamber music concerts, a Concerto Competition Concert as well as masterclasses and sectionals for students in all four of CCYO's ensembles. This past year CCYO has performed concerts at the Port Tobacco Courthouse, the Maryland Veterans Museum, Kris Kringle at the Fairgrounds, the Village Green in Indian Head, Christ Church, La Plata, and the Alice Ferguson Foundation.

Recently, CCYO has been spotlighted in an online film by the Charles County Arts Alliance and has been featured on WTOP radio. Also, two CCYO String Quartets were finalists in the prestigious Washington Performing Arts Society Misbin Chamber Music Competition in Washington, D.C.

The Charles County Youth Orchestra is sponsored in part by grants from the Charles County Arts Alliance, the Charles County Charitable Trust, the Maryland State Arts Council and generous donations from individuals.

