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Town Office | Home | Email Town Hall Staff

MAYOR'S DEN

By Walter J. Behr

POWER OUTAGE - BAD OMEN OR GOOD?

Most of Somerset was inconvenienced the morning of December 13 by a loss of electric power for five or six hours as a result of an ice storm. This could be considered a bad omen or a good one - or both. The outage could signal the start of a difficult winter, as weather forecasters have predicted. On the other hand, it could serve as a reminder to prepare for snow and ice, which historically hit hardest in January and February. For example, in 1996 we had almost 24 inches of snow in January and more than 15 inches in February.

To prepare, consider a windshield scraper, snow shovel, kitty litter or salt for slippery sidewalks and steps, a battery-operated radio, flashlights and candles, and supplies such as toilet tissue. If you lose power, call Pepco at 1-887-737-2662. The new automated system will ask the obvious questions such as name, address and phone number, but also your Pepco account number, so have it at hand before calling. **Parked Cars Impede Snow Plows** Streets will be plowed, sanded and, if necessary, salted by our contractor, Mulheron Tree Experts. Please remember, they cannot clear streets where vehicles are parked, so it is important to park in your driveway even if it is inconvenient. Cumberland Avenue between Surrey Street and the 4902 Cumberland driveway will be left unplowed for sledding. For your safety and that of your neighbors be sure to dig out fire hydrants that are hidden under the snow. Finally, if your house has a Town sidewalk in front or on the side of it, please remember that it is your responsibility to arrange for clearing it and making it safe for pedestrians (including children walking to school). Families that need or want help and others who will be out of Town should make arrangements **in advance**. Neighborhood boys and girls who are available are listed under "Odd Job Helpers" on page 7 of this *Town Journal*. **Clearing Sidewalks as Easy as Writing Check** Twenty families so far have signed up at the Town Hall for the Town snow contractor to do the public sidewalk for them. Rates for shoveling depend on snow depth: \$22.50 for 1" - 4", \$31.50 for 4.1" - 8" and \$48.00 for 8.1" and more. If sanding is required, the charge will be \$6.00 per sidewalks. (All of the above rates are double for corner houses with two public sidewalks.) Subscribing for this service involves posting a deposit of \$100 with Tom Carter at the Town Hall and signing a "Request" form. Tom

will pay the contractor, Mulheron, for all subscribers and return any unused portion of the deposit in April.

COUNCIL APPROVES EROSION CONTROL BID

At the December 4 Town meeting, the Council unanimously accepted the bid of Environmental Quality Resources (EQR) to control erosion in Little Falls Branch. The contract price of \$114,782 compares with the only other bid we received, which was \$123,000. Two other companies that were invited to bid did not respond. As a result of an arrangement with Montgomery County, \$75,000 of the cost of the project was paid us over a year ago by Chase Towers. The payment was in lieu of installing a storm drain system in the development underway in Friendship Heights, at Willard Avenue and Friendship Boulevard, behind the Barlow Building. EQR plans to start work in January and complete it by the end of February. For environmental reasons, no work is permitted in waterways between March 1 and June 15. A number of techniques will be utilized to restore and stabilize the stream banks. These include stone wing deflectors, emergent herbaceous plants and shrubs, and biologs similar to ones previously installed by EQR on the creek bank adjacent to the Town swimming pool. In addition to the bank restoration, the stream channel will be relocated/diverted at three sites, away from eroding banks to original locations. A companion project by Montgomery County to halt erosion behind the North Park and Irene Apartments may or may not proceed this winter. That work will include digging a new 60-foot channel to shift the flow away from the highrises.

DORSET-WISCONSIN TRAFFIC NOT 'CRITICAL'

A traffic count at the intersection of Dorset Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue during morning and evening rush hours on November 28 concluded that volume is below the "critical" level as defined by Montgomery County. This study and similar ones at three other intersections are being financed by Chevy Chase Village, Town of Chevy Chase and Somerset, our share to be no greater than \$4,000.

Volume at Western Avenue and 41st Street/Cedar Parkway/McKinley Street was also determined to be less than critical. On the other hand, traffic counts at Bradley Lane-Connecticut Avenue and Bradley-Wisconsin exceeded the critical level, according to our consultant. The

above findings and results of separate counts by consultants for Chevy Chase Land Company were presented at new hearings earlier this month by the County Hearing Examiner on the development proposed for the Chevy Chase Center parking lot. The County Council will consider the application for the second time once it receives the new report from the Hearing Examiner. Chevy Chase Village and the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights - of which Somerset is a member - argued that proposed development should be downsized because traffic already exceeds critical volume at the two Bradley intersections. They also stressed that critical lane volume counts understate the congestion problem because they ignore the *time* it takes to get through intersections.

BURGLAR'S HAUL: COSTUME JEWELRY CUFF LINKS

A Cumberland Avenue resident returned from work on December 11, had dinner and eventually walked upstairs to retire for the night. Open dresser drawers stopped him in his tracks - his house had been robbed. After a careful check, he concluded that the only loss was a pair of inexpensive cuff links. It turned out that someone had gained entry by removing a basement window in the rear of the house. Police were able to retrieve fingerprints and footprints. Although the loss was minimal, the experience was jarring. If the resident had turned on the burglar alarm, the intruder might have abandoned the effort before entering. Somerset is certainly one of the safest neighborhoods in the Metro area, but we do experience occasional intrusions and other incidents of vandalism and crime. Therefore, please call 911 if you see or suspect trouble - you need not give your name. Also, remember to lock your cars, windows and doors, including garage doors; do not let strangers into your house; and, when you are away, make your house lived-in by putting lights and a radio or television on timers and keeping blinds and draperies at least partially appear open.

SOMERSET SCHOOL MODERNIZATION

ARCHITECTS FOR RAZING ALL OR MOST OF STRUCTURE

The long-awaited Feasibility Study for Somerset School modernization has been released. Muse Architects recommend two building plans and two site plans. First, **building plans**. Muse opts

for either retaining the newest portion of the structure, built in 1971, with significant additions or an entirely new building. Either would be three stories.

The former option would cost \$8.5 million, the latter, \$8.9 million. Retaining and improving the existing two-story building - *not* recommended - would cost \$7.2 million. The architects also recommend two **site plans**, "**B**" and "**C**". Both provide for faculty parking in the southeast corner of the site, with access from Deal Place. (Deal and "Little" Cumberland residents have expressed serious misgivings about this.) Both **B** and **C** would permit student drop-off and pick-up either on Warwick or in the Deal parking lot. From the Deal parking lot, children would reach the building via a covered walkway. **Dedicated Bus Loop in Both Plans** Both site plans include a dedicated bus loop off Warwick. Both would "save as many . . . trees as possible in the wooded area along Warwick Place . . ." Both would retain "a portion" of the tot lot (which was refurbished by the Town in 1997 to the tune of \$22,000). Both **B** and **C** plans would increase playing field space (**C** more than **B**). **B** and **C** place the gym next to the diminished tot lot, although locating it at the north end of the school is still possible. Both **B** and **C** plans would reduce the wooded area along the southern property line. The chief difference between **B** and **C** is that **C** would move the building closer to Warwick. **C** would thus accommodate a larger playing field and a 42-space parking lot instead of 36 spaces in **B**. Public meetings to explain the site plans and consider public reaction to them are expected to begin in March. Demolition and construction are still scheduled to begin in June 2002.

RESIDENTS HAVE LEG UP FOR SCHOLARSHIP

Two \$1,500 college scholarships will be awarded again this year to Montgomery County high school and/or college students with at least average grades who are involved in community service and who plan a career in government or public service. Preference will be given to residents of Somerset and the 20 other County municipalities and special taxing districts. The scholarships are being offered by the Montgomery Chapter of the Maryland Municipal League. Applicants must provide their education objectives and career goals. They should explain why the awarded is merited and how it would be used. Also required are an essay on the importance or function of municipal government, transcript of scholastic records and two letters of recommendation. Application blanks and announcements are available at the Town Hall, at the Montgomery College Office of Financial Aid and from high school counselors. Completed applications with attachments must be received in the Somerset Town Hall by April 12. If you have questions, feel free to call me at 301-654-1258.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

On behalf of your local government, I wish you a wonderful New Year and promise that the Town staff and elected officials will exert every effort to make Somerset a community that you are proud to say is where you live.

We welcome your questions, requests, suggestions and - yes- even your concerns. We are looking forward to serving you in 2001. Walter J. Behr Mayor

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

HOLIDAY GREETINGS from the staff at Town Hall -- Tom Carter, Corrie Morsey, Larry Owens, Jonathan Dawkins, Felix Vasquez and Enrique Cabrera.

HOLIDAY TRASH PICKUP

J&J, Inc. will be picking up recyclables (commingles, paper and yard refuse) on Wednesday, December 27, rather than on Tuesday, their usual day. Normal recycle service will resume on Tuesday, January 2. This schedule does not affect household trash, which will be picked up on Tuesday, December 26. Reminder: Except for Wednesday, December 27, yard waste will be collected on Tuesdays only during December, January and February. Friday service will resume in March.

CHRISTMAS TREE DISPOSAL

Christmas trees will be picked up by J&J on **Tuesday, January 9**. This is the only day for pickup this year. J&J will make only one pass through Town that day, so be sure to have your tree at the curb no later than 7:00 a.m. Trees must be free of tinsel, lights and ornaments, removed from any bases or stands, and not in plastic bags.

LEAF SEASON ENDS

Our new leaf machine worked superbly this year. The men have actually only gone out for individual stacks in December. The collection season ends on **December 29**. The way to get rid of any remaining leaves is to put them in your mulch pile or at the curb on Tuesdays in **paper** bags or reusable containers.

LAST CHANCE FOR 2001 CALENDARS

League of Women Voters calendars for 2001 are still available at the Town Hall for \$5, or call Betty Palmer at 301-654-1115.

MVA on Wheels

The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration offers a mobile service at the Friendship Heights Village Center. This is a convenient way to get new tags or to update a driver's license. The next date is January 22. For information, call the Friendship Heights Village Center at (301)-656-2797.

Legislation

At the December 4 meeting, the Town Council: 1. Failed to take action on the recommendation to change parking in the 5500 block of Uppingham Street. (Nat Finkelstein moved to enact the change, but there was no second to his motion.) 2. Introduced legislation to amend the Town Code to permit rental of the Town Hall for social, educational and cultural gatherings not only by Somerset residents, but also non-residents sponsored by a Town resident. (This reflects the current policy and brings the Town Code up-to-date.) 3. Introduced legislation to amend the Town Building Code to require certain building permit applicants to include information on front setback, height and percent of lot coverage and to require a photo of the property on all building permit applications.

Council Actions

At the December 4 meeting, the Council took the following actions:

1. Confirmed the Mayor's reappointment of Ellie Fink to the Board of Supervisors of Elections for a three-year term. 2. Set dates for nominations and election of three Councilmembers for two-year terms: nominations on Monday, March 5, and elections on Monday, April 2, 2001. 3. Set tennis fees for the 2001 season at \$5 per household. (Frankel, Gubser, Kessler and Proctor for; Finkelstein opposed.) 4. Approved the contract extension of Hughes Landscaping to remove the leaves from the pool parking lot throughout the leaf pickup season at \$4,500 per year for the years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. (This is the same cost as this year.) 5. Awarded the contract for Little Falls Branch erosion control to Environmental Quality Resources, LLC for \$114,782 and transferred \$20,000 from Capital Projects Fund Streets to Capital Projects Fund Erosion Control. 6. Approved a proposal to have the Town pay the fees for two special trash pickups a year on dates set by the Town Council.

FREE LECTURES FOR RETIREES

Retirees have a wide choice of new topics in a January lecture series sponsored by the Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR). The January lectures, scheduled from 10:00 to noon Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during the month, are held in the educational wing of the Temple Baptist Church, 3820 Nebraska Avenue, NW. The ILR is non-denominational and non-sectarian. All are welcome. There is no fee for the lectures and no reservations are required. Interested persons should telephone the ILR office for a copy of the lecture schedule (202) 885-3920. ILR, an affiliate of American University, is a membership organization of retired persons. Their study program offers two ten-week terms of non-credit courses.

For Somerset School Pedestrians

CROSSING GUARD POSITION OPEN

By Terry Roberts

The County Police Department has approved the position of a crossing guard at the corner of Dorset Avenue and Warwick Place. They are looking for a candidate, preferably someone from within our school community. Hours of work will be approximately 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. and 2:45 - 3:15 p.m. each school day. The position pays \$10.43/hour. The person would work only one hour per day but would be paid for a minimum of two-and-a-half hours per day. The great plus for the right person is that the position includes health and retirement benefits. The Police Department provides all training and uniforms. Please call Officer Buck Sauriol at 301-657-0138 or me at 301-657-1455 if you are interested or know someone who may be.

Obituaries

ALAN SWOFF SUCCUMBS TO HEART ATTACK

Alan Swoff, who lived on Falstone Avenue for 45 years, died at home in his sleep of a heart attack on November 28. He was 72.

Alan was employed by Giant Food for 41 years, starting as a grocery buyer and serving as Vice President of Frozen Foods Operations for many years prior to retiring in 1991. He was born in Brooklyn and graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a major in food technology. During the Korean War, he served in the Army and was stationed in Japan. As a notary public and enrolled tax agent, he assisted numerous Somerset families during his retirement years. Survivors include his wife, Corinne; three daughters, Carol Gerold, Ellen Swoff and Laurie Rains; and four grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to Congregation Beth El in Bethesda.

FORMER RESIDENT FRANK GARFIELD DIES AT 99

By Zola Dincin Schneider

Frank R. Garfield, long-time resident of the Town and an economist whose passionate advocacy for democratic principles knew no bounds, died of pneumonia in Yarmouth, Maine, on November 11 at the age of 99. Frank lived on Warwick Place from 1941 to 1988. Born in Connecticut, Frank graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Amherst College. He attended Cornell University and went on to the University of North Carolina to be an Assistant Professor in Economics. He came to Washington in 1929 to work for the Federal Reserve Board, rising to Chief of the Domestic Business Section and then worked part-time as Advisor until his full retirement in 1966. He served as chairman of the Town's Board of Supervisors of Elections from 1965 to 1978. His chief goal, apart from making sure that election were scrupulously fair, was to make voting as easy as possible and to reduce obstacles to participation. He made several significant changes in the election process, broadening the base of voters to include residents who were not U.S. citizens and 18-year-olds, simplifying absentee voting and introducing post card registration, all of which are standards still in use. Frank was devoted to the intellectual life, avidly reading to the time of his death books, newspapers and magazines of every stripe. He enjoyed talking about ideas with all comers and would happily engage his friends and neighbors including their children, in discussions filled with dry wit about politics, the meaning of democracy and happenings in Washington. Frank and Marjorie undertook the upbringing of their yard man's several children, bringing them into their life with spirit and good will. One daughter lived with them for several years, graduating from B-CC High School and spending her summers with them in Maine. Both he and his wife, Marjorie, were avid gardeners, not only planting and

caring for their own garden, but with civic pride also tending to Somerset School's greensward. In appreciation, the lower playground was dedicated to Marjorie after her death in 1985. Frank moved to Maine in 1988 to be closer to his nieces, and at the age of 87 he took up painting and drawing at the local community college, deriving enormous pleasure from the challenge. One niece wrote to his neighbors here, "He lived a full life, dying in full possession of his mind and spiritually joyful." He was a rare person, and it was a privilege to have known him.

First Night Montgomery

OBSERVE NEW YEAR'S EVE WITH FAMILY

An oldies group, the Fabulous Hubcaps, and the Seldom Scene, a bluegrass band, will be the featured entertainers at First Night Montgomery 2001, the County's family oriented, alcohol-free celebration of the arts. The event will be held at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds in Gaithersburg on December 31. The celebration will begin with free children's activities from 3 to 6 p.m. The evening program will run from 7 p.m. to 12 midnight. Entertainment will be indoors or in heated tents and there will be a heated dining room. Food will be available for purchase. Come to the fairgrounds for the only fireworks in the County on New Year's eve. There will be two fireworks shows, preceded by laser displays, one at 6 p.m. and another at midnight. Admission for the evening program costs \$10 for adults. Children ages 10 and under are free. First Night buttons can be purchased in advance at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Center or at any County library or recreation center. Free parking will be available at the Fairgrounds, and a free shuttle will run from the Shady Grove Metro Station. For more information, call 240-777-6821.

Martin Luther King Day

REDEEM THE DREAM YOUTH CELEBRATION

Children and adults are invited to Bohrer Park Activity Center, 506 South Frederick Avenue, Gaithersburg from 2 to 5 p.m. on Monday, January 15, to participate in service activities in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The theme of the event is "Redeem the Dream — A Celebration of Youth." The Montgomery County Volunteer Center has organized a tutoring mentoring fair, hands-on service projects and a bone marrow drive, all reminders of Dr. King's commitment to social change through service. The tutoring mentoring fair will showcase non-profit programs that have improved the lives of County children through tutoring and mentoring partnerships. On hand to inspire individuals and businesses to get involved will be representatives from the following organizations: The George B. Thomas Learning Academy, Family Services Agency, Mental Health Association, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the National Capital Area and Guide Youth Services. Adults and children will have opportunity to perform

hands-on service projects that will make a difference in the lives of women cancer patients, children with life-threatening illnesses and the homeless. Craft projects to benefit the women's cancer control program and NIH Childrens's Inn will be available, as well as a bag lunch assembly line to provide 200 lunches to a local shelter. In addition, the NIH marrow donor program will conduct a drive to obtain blood samples for bone marrow sampling. The Volunteer Center activities will take place in conjunction with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration program. The celebration program will begin at 3 p.m. and end at 5. It will include remarks by County Executive Doug Duncan. To find out more about celebration plans, please contact Andrea Jolly or Anne Proctor at the Montgomery County Volunteer Center, 240-777-2600.

Culture in Friendship Heights

WEDNESDAY CONCERTS, ART EXHIBIT FREE

Friendship Heights never runs out of talent for the hour-long, free concerts at 7:30 every Wednesday night in the Village Center at 443 South Park Avenue. Here is the schedule for January:

January 3 — Susan Klick, principal flutist with the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra.

January 10 — Violinist Nayiri Poochikian and Pianist Mary-Elizabeth Stephenson.

January 17 — Soprano, pianist, cellist and bassist who play as the Seneca Ensemble.

January 24 — Original pop and rock a cappella singing by the Chromatics.

January 31 — Spirituals and opera selections by Ellyn Crawford.

Monday Morning Painters will exhibit their works in the Friendship Heights Village Center from January 3 through the end of the month. The group includes instructor Michael Harrington and Somerset resident Florence Gang.

All manner of materials will be on display — acrylics, water color Japanese and textured papers, saran wrap, tin foil and illustration board.

Everyone is invited to meet the artists at a reception on Sunday, January 14, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Exhibit hours are Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Town Office | Calendar of Events | Bulletin Board | Resource Links | Town History | Home | Email Town Hall Staff