

MAYOR'S DEN

By Walter J. Behr

STILL TIME TO SIGN FOR FLU SHOTS

Fifty residents have signed up for flu shots, but there is still time to add your name to the list.

Shots will be given at the Town Hall, Friday, November 3, between 4 and 7 p.m. by registered nurses from MedStar Health Visiting Nurse Association (VNA). Call Tom Carter in the Town office if you would like your name added to the list. Once registered, you may come for your shot anytime between 4 and 7. Flu shots will be \$15 a piece, of which \$5 will be a tax-deductible contribution to provide home and hospice care for the needy. **Please be sure to bring a check with you.** If you are covered by Medicare Part B and are not enrolled in a health maintenance organization, you will not have to pay, but you will, of course, have to show your Medicare card.

Pneumonia Shots Also Available

For the first time, the VNA is offering pneumonia vaccinations as well as flu shots. Medicare covers pneumonia as well as flu shots. Pneumonia shots for others is \$25. VNA suggests that you consult your physician before deciding whether or not to get a pneumonia shot.

You should consider getting a flu shot if you----

- Have demanding family or work responsibilities and can't risk being sick or taking sick leave;
- Wish to reduce your chances of catching the flu;
- Are around children frequently;
- Provide essential community services;
- Have contact with people at high risk for complications from the flu;
- Are 65 years of age or older;
- Have long-term heart or lung problems or other high-risk medical conditions that lower your body's immune system (including diabetes, kidney disease, asthma, cancer, AIDS, etc.).

You cannot get flu from a flu shot.

For further information, pick up a flyer at Town Hall, call VNA at 301-853-7551 and ask for the flu program coordinator, or call your physician.

SNOW PLANS BETTER THAN NO PLANS

In the midst of our warmest fall in memory, it may seem early to get serious about planning for snow removal, but, as we all know, the weather can suddenly change. The fact is (as the Presidential candidates love to say) we have had major snowfalls here *in November*.

If you have a Town sidewalk in front or on the side of your property, you are required by law to remove snow - or sand it if icy - within 24 hours. This rule is in our Town Code for the convenience and, more important, *the safety*, of pedestrians. It is important to remember that even if you or others in your family normally undertake this chore, arrangements should be made in advance should the snow arrive when able-bodied residents of your house are out of the area.

Two Choices if You Want Help

Your Town government and resident-volunteer Philip Young have arranged the following two options to do the job if you are away or want or need help for any reason:

- Arrange - preferably in advance - for one of Somerset's young residents to clear your sidewalks. What you pay is obviously a matter that you and your shoveler must agree upon. It could be an hourly rate, or it could be a fee for the job -- depending on the depth and consistency of the snow. Whether or not you have a Town sidewalk bordering your yard, you might want the boy or girl to clear your driveway and private walkway. The list of young people available for snow removal appears below.
- **Sign up at the Town Hall for your *public sidewalk only* to be cleared by employees of Mulheron Tree Experts at rates negotiated with the Town and which also appear below.** Rates are per job, per snowfall and vary with the depth of snow and the number of residents who sign up for this service. The Mulheron rate schedule appears below.

To contract for this service, send a deposit check of \$100, **payable to "Town of Somerset,"** to Town Hall. After each snowfall the Town will pay the contractor the appropriate fee. For example, if 50 houses sign up for the service and we have a 1-inch to 4-inch snowfall, \$22.50 will be deducted from each \$100 deposit, and Tom Carter will send a check to Mulheron for 50 times \$22.50, or \$1,125. If that is the only snowfall of the season, each participant will receive a refund from the Town next spring of \$100 minus \$22.50 or \$77.50.

Whether you shovel or you make arrangements with young residents to shovel or sign up for Mulheron to do the job, let's make our sidewalks safe for pedestrians this winter.

MULHERON RATES FOR CLEARING SNOW

FROM TOWN OF SOMERSET SIDEWALKS

Hand shoveling 1" - 4": 1 - 10 houses \$28.00

11 - 50 houses \$22.50

51 - 75 houses \$20.00

76 - 100 houses \$19.00

over 100 houses \$18.00

Hand shoveling 4.1" - 8": 1 - 10 houses \$36.00

11 - 50 houses \$31.50

51 - 75 houses \$28.00

76 - 100 houses \$26.50

over 100 houses \$25.00

Hand shoveling 8.1" and over: 1 - 50 houses \$48.00

51 - 100 houses \$42.50

over 100 houses \$38.00

Corner houses that have sidewalks on both sides will be considered two houses.

SOMERSET, ONE OF *MARYLAND'S 157*

The full-color insert in this *Town Journal* is the double-page spread on Somerset in the new book, *Maryland's 157: The Incorporated Cities and Towns*. Similar word and picture sketches are included in the volume for each of the State's municipalities.

A millennium celebration project of the Maryland Municipal League (MML), the book attempts to achieve the following three goals:

- Help make Maryland citizens aware of the uniqueness of municipal government in our State;
- Provide an understanding of the nature of municipal government; and
- Promote a willingness among citizens to become involved in the level of government closest to them.

To accomplish these goals, MML will give a copy of the book to every public and private school and every library in the State. Also, the publication may be reviewed in the Town Hall and may be ordered through the Town office for \$33 per volume.

All new Somerset residents will receive "Somerset" reprints in the welcoming packets given them when we learn of their arrival in Town.

NEW ELECTRIC SUPPLIER FOR TOWN FACILITIES

Beginning in December, Washington Gas Energy Services, a subsidiary of Washington Gas, will replace Pepco as the supplier of electric power for the Town Hall and garage, swimming pool and street lights for at least the next 18 months. Rates will be below "standard offer service" rates guaranteed to all Maryland consumers by State law.

The new arrangement was made by joining the Montgomery County government, public school system and other County agencies and some municipalities in an agreement signed last week by Clerk-Treasurer Tom Carter, who is also the Town's contracting officer. Last February, the Town Council made the decision to join the group. Councilmember Anne Proctor participated in discussions with County and other officials which led up to the bidding and selection process.

Washington Gas Energy Services was selected not only for their rates, but also because they are able to supply at least three percent of total energy in "clean" and "renewable" fuel sources. "Clean" refers to energy generated from sources that produce less emission (but may have other environmental impacts). "Renewable" means energy sources that can be replenished in a fairly short period of time.

If the County decides that market conditions are favorable and the contractor is willing, the contract may be extended beyond its termination date of May 31, 2002.

TRICK OR COINS FOR UNICEF

On Tuesday evening, many of your neighborhood children - disguised as witches, ghosts and other scary characters - will be carrying little orange UNICEF boxes and will welcome any donations you wish to offer. UNICEF funds are used to improve children's health all over the world. Last year Somerset School kids collected over \$1,500.

RESIDENTS, ALSO, MAY CHOOSE ELECTRIC COMPANY

Unfortunately, reduced electric rates for Town facilities (described above) will not apply to residents since State law does not permit counties or municipalities to serve as aggregators for their residents. However, consumers in our area may choose between staying with Pepco or signing up with the only other supplier to residents approved to date by the Maryland Public Service Commission.

Strange as it may seem, Pepco's only competitor for supplying electric power to individual consumers is a Pepco affiliate by the name of PowerChoice. However, there is a difference in their rate plans.

Pepco's rates are higher in the summer, when air conditioning can put a terrible strain on generating facilities, than their rates in cooler weather. PowerChoice is offering a single year-round rate that is lower than Pepco's summer rate, but higher than Pepco's winter rate. Another difference is that Pepco's rates are guaranteed by the State until July 2006, while PowerChoice could raise its rate after just one year.

Two toll-free phone numbers may help you traverse the electric utility deregulation maize: PowerChoice can be reached at 1-800-ENERGY-9. For official information on electricity deregulation and other public utility matters, call the Maryland Public Service Commission at 1-800-800-4491.

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

PHONE BOOK RECYCLING

Remember that your old telephone books can be placed in paper bags in your blue bins every Tuesday for recycling.

LEAF PICKUP UNDERWAY

Vacuuming of leaves piled on the grass near the curb has begun and will continue into December. PLEASE DO NOT PUT LEAVES IN THE STREET. KINDLY INFORM YOUR LAWN SERVICE OF THIS REQUEST.

It is also important that the piles consist only of leaves - NO STICKS, STONES, BRICKS OR OTHER DENSE OR SHARP DEBRIS. These materials will damage the machinery blades.

We are following the same procedure as last year. Each morning the maintenance men survey the Town streets and start vacuuming where the biggest piles exist. They then move on to the next biggest piles, and so on. Through streets will still be done regularly to keep the traffic moving smoothly.

Residents who prefer to bag their leaves or dispose of them in a mulch pile in their yards are urged to do so. Leaves in PAPER BAGS or REUSABLE CONTAINERS will be picked up on TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS by our trash company, J&J Inc. Please place in front yards near the curb. Plastic bags may NOT be used. Leaf burning is PROHIBITED!

TOWN MAINTENANCE VEHICLES

Please use caution when driving behind the Town tractors and trucks. They are often moving very slowly as the men work alongside or in front of the vehicles. Kindly resist riding on their bumpers; give them some space and yourself room to see around them so you are sure it is safe to pass. Now, during leaf season, the vehicles will often be stopped while picking up leaves. It is not feasible for them to move out of the way immediately. If they did, they would never finish their work. You might save time by using another street to go around them.

DIRECTORY REVISION

If you are new to the community, if you wish to be included in the Town Directory for the first time, or if you wish to amend your family's entry, please complete and return the postcard enclosed with this *Town Journal* to the Town Hall at 4510 Cumberland Avenue **no later than December 8**. If you do not return this card, your name will appear as it does in the present directory. Here is your chance to add your e-mail addresses as well. Children may be listed, too. If you are new in Town and have not completed a similar form from your newcomer's packet, you must complete this card to be added to the 2001 version of the Directory. Questions? Please call Tom at 301-657-3211.

2001 CALENDARS

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

PERMITS GRANTED

The following permits were issued by the Mayor during the past month. (Building permits are approved by the Town Council.)

Trees: Jim Boughton, 4723 Cumberland Avenue, to remove a dying dogwood from his front yard.

Caroline Springer, 4824 Dorset Avenue, to remove a decayed and dying hackberry in her back yard.

Fences: Scott and Susan Puritz, 4819 Essex Avenue, to erect a 4-foot-high black chain-link fence around their back yard, a picket fence with arbor between their house and garage, and a 6 1/2-foot-high cedar vertical board fence in the side yard.

Bridget and Michael Cowie, 5511 Uppingham Street, to extend the existing fence along the left side of their lot to the rear lot line subject to receipt of County fence permit.

Council Actions

At the October 2 meeting, the Council took the following actions:

1. Heard and discussed the independent auditor's report for Fiscal Year 2000 presented by Rodney Saunders of Keller Bruner & Company.
2. Approved a tree removal permit for Len and Roz Harris, 5515 Trent Street, to take down five, crowded white pine trees from their back yard.
3. Approved a building permit for Tim Sprehe, 5504 Surrey Street, to add a front porch.
4. Approved a proposal by Lawson & Associates to perform architectural services for renovating Town Hall upstairs for more efficient use as a storage facility for \$7,500 plus reimbursable expenses. (Vote 3-2. Finkelstein, Frankel and Gubser for; Kessler and Proctor opposed.)
5. Heard discussion of recommendation by traffic consultant Everett Carter to change parking in 5500 block of Uppingham Street (between Falstone Avenue and Trent Street) from northwest (even) side to southeast (odd) side.
6. Approved a building permit for David Batson, 5526 Uppingham Street, to replace a shed in his back yard contingent upon receipt of a County permit and variance.

PTA NETS \$20,000

1,000 CONTRIBUTE TO 13TH CLASSIC

By Eileen Coen

Co-Chair, Back-to-School Classic 2000

For the 13th straight year, Somerset residents graciously welcomed hundreds of runners and spectators into our neighborhood, vacating our streets to make way for the 8K and 2K race courses, and helping to make this year's Back-to-School Classic one of the most successful fundraisers for Somerset Elementary School. This year, the Classic attracted more than 1000 registrants and raised more than \$20,000 for our neighborhood school! Participants enjoyed a gorgeous autumn morning, a delicious post-race brunch and prizes from many of our local businesses.

On behalf of the Somerset PTA, the Race Committee would like to thank the Town of Somerset and all who participated by sponsoring the race, volunteering on the race staff, running, cheering, buying tee-shirts or just remembering to park off the street. Special thanks to Somerset resident and Maryland State Senator Brian Frosh, who helped emcee the post-race awards ceremony for the 8K, 2K and Fun Run events; to David Herbick, who designed the "cool" tee-shirts; and to the McGarrahs on Dorset Avenue, who once again "lent" their electric outlets and front lawn to the Classic.

Anthony Belber, Elizabeth Feldman Win 8K

Top finishers in the 8K event were Anthony Belber, 27, of Washington, D.C., with a time of 27:09 and Elizabeth Feldman, 33, of Chevy Chase, with a time of 32:51. In the 2K event, 18-year-old Lucas Nilsson (8:07) and 11-year-old Nicky Extergorm finished in first place. Congratulations to our 14-year-old Town residents who placed 2nd and 3rd: Adam Bookman (8:13) and Brooks Lape (8:27)!

You'll recognize many of the Fun Run first place winners from the neighborhood (name followed by age group): Jack Feldman & Sophie McCann (4); Christopher Tuttle, Tanguy Jozz, Zoe Ibson & Caroline Khanna (5); Elie Goldman & Madeleine Basil (6); Daniel Herbick, Sam Kapner, Kelly Abrams & Tasha Belikove (7); Alex Sherman, Matt Bookman & Jana London (8); Jack Sunderland, Alex Miller, Julia Kohanek, Kathleen Sisti & Caitlin Maher (9); Clovis Maalouf, Clare Hanlon & Diane Camargo (10-11).

As always, the Classic would not have been possible without the support of many businesses. For the 13th year, Evers & Co. Real Estate Co. has been the title sponsor. Thanks also to our primary sponsors, Whitten Laser Eye Associates & Burness Communications. Other major sponsors included: Belikove & Graves Insurance & Investments, MacMannes, Inc., Picture

Frame Shop Inc. & Gallery, Atlantic Electric Supply Corp., London & Mead Attorney at Law, Medical Pharmacy of Chevy Chase and River Road Texaco. The delicious brunch was provided by Breads Unlimited, Fresh Fields/Whole Foods Market, Drink More Water, Honest Tea, Starbucks Coffee, Giant Food and Clayboys Shaved Ice.

TEE SHIRTS STILL AVAILABLE

Have you noticed the Classic tee shirts on your friends and neighbors? They're cool! They're fun! And buying one will support your community school! Do you wish you had gotten yourself a Classic tee shirt? Do you wish you had another one? We still have some available. The \$10 you send goes straight into the Somerset Elementary School PTA fund. Call Eileen Coen, 301-656-7008.

Somerset School Archives

Zola Schneider, who has lived across the street from Somerset School for 38 years, is developing school archives. She would appreciate photos, articles, newspaper clippings, documents and drawings relating to the school's activities, events and individuals associated with our neighborhood school. Tee shirts from past Somerset School Classic races would be especially appreciated.

Call Zola Schneider at 301-654-5889, or e-mail her at zischn@erols.com.

Correspondence from Citizens

A FLOOD OF PROBLEMS

The first indication something was wrong that hot summer day was the drip-drip-drip rhythm of water falling on the new clothes dryer. Okay, call the plumber. A pinhole leak you say? Fix it. Well, after experiencing five pinhole leaks on our basement level and repiping that entire level in the fall of 1999, we are now suddenly facing more leaks and must repipe our entire house. Is this just simple homeowner's bad luck?

The Washington Post first reported on the unusually high number of pinhole leak complaints made to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) by Montgomery and Prince George's County homeowners back in July (Real Estate 7/1/00). While the article mentioned various theories explaining this high incidence (not experienced by DC, Northern Virginia or other MD counties), plumbers and others in the field tended to focus on theories involving either a change in WSSC's water treatment process or delivery or copper pipe's reliability. A follow-up article in the *Post* this fall said two experts had been hired to further examine these theories. Both WSSC and the copper pipe industry say they don't believe the problems are their fault. Now, in

Saturday's *Post* (Real Estate 10/21/00) we read of an 82-year-old resident of Chevy Chase who has been dropped by her homeowners insurance company after filing for water damage three times (for a total of \$3,741) since pinhole leaks began in July 1999.

Watch Those Cold Water Copper Pipes

According to a WSSC report (9/14/00) based on preliminary data of 600 households (out of 400,000 accounts), the following are initial observations:

- The majority of pinhole leaks are being reported in cold water horizontal copper piping;
- Most pinhole leaks are being reported in the older areas of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, with a majority in Montgomery. (WSSC is unable to determine if the problem is greater in Montgomery County or if more people are simply reporting from here;
- Customers living in the older communities of Beltsville, Bethesda, Chevy Chase and Silver Spring are reporting more pinhole leaks in copper pipes;
- Nearly 80 percent of the reports involved homes built prior to 1970;
- The data show no direct correlation between water main breaks or maintenance activity and reports of pinhole leaks in copper pipes.

My husband and I are not alone in our travails. Conversations with other Somerset neighbors indicate similar experiences. What can we do? First, if you haven't already reported pinhole leaks to the WSSC, do so by calling 301-206-4001 and filling out their questionnaire over the phone or on their website (www.wssc.dst.md.us). Second, turn off your water when you go away for extended periods of time. The costliest damage occurs when the leaks are not caught immediately. Finally, call me at 301-656-3158. I'd like to make an informal survey of specific Town of Somerset pinhole leak problems.

L. Paige Whitley

Cumberland Avenue

VOTE ON NOVEMBER 7

There is not much time left, but registered voters who are unable to get to Somerset School to cast their ballots in the presidential election on November 7 may still arrange to vote by absentee ballot.

Call 240-777-8565 for details.

If you feel the need for more information on candidates and issues you will be voting on, you may

go on-line as follows: **League of Women Voters: www.bcpl.net/~lwn/mont/monthp.html.**

County Council of PTAs: www.us.net/mccpta.

County Matters

LEARN ABOUT NEW LIBRARY CATALOG SYSTEM

Have you been intimidated by the new library catalog system in operation at the County's libraries? Don't worry; the Bethesda library is sponsoring a series of free workshops to teach you how to use the system. Staff will be on hand to answer you questions, assist you with using new features, and show you how to find what you need. The sessions will be held on Saturdays from 9-10a.m. Upcoming dates are November 4, 11, and 18 and December 2, 9, and 16. No reservations are needed.

APPLICANTS SOUGHT FOR REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Dividing Montgomery County into five Council districts is required by the County Charter as a result of this year's Census. The Council appoints eight members from recommendations submitted by the central committee of each major political party, and selects a ninth member from citizens who apply directly to the Council.

The Commission is required to present its plan, with an explanation to the County Council by November 15 of next year.

Deadline for applying for the ninth spot is November 27. Details are available at the Town Hall.

MERIT SYSTEM BOARD HAS VACANCY

The County Council is accepting applications until November 20 for a three-year term on the Merit System Protection Board, which is concerned with the rights of County career employees and also comments on proposed changes in the merit system law and regulations.

Normally, the board meets for about four hours in the evening twice a month. In addition, the board holds hearings, which can be during the day or evening. Compensation is \$5,721 a year.

If you are interested, check with Tom Carter, who has details in the Town office.

[Town Office](#) | [Calendar of Events](#) | [Bulletin Board](#) | [Resource Links](#) | [Town History](#) | [Home](#) | [Email Town Hall Staff](#)