

Volume 47, No. 2 August 20, 2002

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Mayor's Den

By Walter J. Behr

What to Do About Somerset Deer, Raccoons

Residents are invited to learn what to do about increasing numbers of deer and raccoons in Somerset at a workshop in the Town Hall on **Monday, September 9, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.** Rob Gibbs, who is in charge of the Montgomery County deer control program, will help homeowners cope with, and minimize, deer damage to their gardens and landscapes.

Deer have added aesthetic, environmental and economic value to Montgomery County, but the rising deer population has had undesirable effects as well. High deer numbers have resulted in increasing damage to gardens, crops and parkland. Deer have caused auto collision and cases of lyme disease.

An integrated pest management approach will provide attendees with proven strategies to reduce deer/human conflicts. Numerous products and methods are available including vegetarian management, repellents and fencing. Gibbs will explain which products work and don't work and which methods might be best for Somerset yards and lifestyles.

A special feature, added at the request of a resident, will be how to limit the presence of raccoons and how to get rid of them if they do appear in your back yard.

New Venue and Date for Welcome Party

The Town of Somerset is a wonderful place to live and is actively sought out by many house hunters. Over the past year, 16 new families have moved in. So, once again, it's time for the annual welcome party where old residents greet new residents who have moved in more recently. This year, it will take place at the **Town Hall on Sunday, October 6th, from 4-6 p.m.** Bring your favorite CDs, and then relax

with a glass of wine or some other light refreshments provided by the Town. There will be entertainment for the children.

Please call Bonnie Lewin (301-907-4772), Ellen Butts (301-652-2454), Richard Furcolo (301-718-4562) or Jeffrey Slavin (301-654-6767) if you can help with arrangements.

Your Choice of E-Mail Networks

If you have been away and haven't read last month's *Town Journal*, you may not know that we now have two e-mail networks in Somerset.

One is to keep residents abreast of important Town developments such as the time and place of committee meetings and special events, delays in trash and recycling collections, revisions in Town Council agendas after the *Town Journal* has gone to press, and emergency updates and instructions.

The second e-mail network is for residents who want only information and guidance in case of an emergency.

If you are not already registered with either network and want to join, simply call Tom Carter at the Town Hall (301-657-3211) or e-mail him at clerk@townofsomerset.com. Be sure to specify whether you want to join the regular Town e-mail network, which will include emergency news, or the network that will be used exclusively for emergencies.

Fee Proposed for Extending Building Permits

On the agenda for the September 3 Town Council meeting, at 8:40 p.m., is introduction of a proposed Town Code amendment that would impose a fee for extension of building permits.

Original permits are issued for one year. The fee is based on the cost of the proposed construction. If the project is not completed within the year, it has to be extended by the Council, and no fee is required. The Council approves the extension because it has no choice: rejecting the extension would impose a hardship on the applicant and, in many cases, the neighbors.

What prompted the proposal is that a few construction projects have, for one reason or another, dragged on and on, disturbing neighbors and causing traffic delays. The proposed fee for an extension of six months is 50 percent of the original building permit fee. The hope is that the fee — though modest — will serve as an incentive to complete the job in a timely fashion.

Nearby Birds Infected, but Not People

Although birds and mosquitoes in the vicinity have tested positive for West Nile virus, there are still no confirmed cases of infected individuals in the entire State, according to the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. National statistics indicate that less than one percent of people who are infected get sick.

The department no longer wants to test dead birds that you may find on your property or on the street or sidewalk since they know there are infected birds in Zip Code Area 20815. However, the department would still like you to call **1-866-866-2769** to report dead birds.

Dispose of them in double plastic bags deposited in your trash can. Do not touch the birds.

Infected mosquitoes have been found as close to Somerset as Grafton and West Kirke Streets in Chevy Chase Village and Chamberlin Street in Kenwood. Therefore, public health authorities suggest staying indoors at dawn and dusk, which is when mosquitoes are most likely to swarm. When you do go out, wear clothing that covers arms, legs and feet. Use repellents containing 20-30 percent DEET.

To prevent mosquitoes from breeding, remove standing water from bird baths, dog dishes, wading pools, roof gutters, wheelbarrows, buckets and bottles. Also, check your window and door screens and repair holes.

A flier entitled “West Nile” is available at the Town Hall.

What Vehicles May Park on Town Streets?

After considering several drafts of ordinances restricting parking of commercial vehicles, trailers, buses and motor homes on Town streets, the Town Council decided that a new law is not necessary. The feeling of Council members and the Mayor is that the Montgomery County law, which the Town adopted in 1989, is appropriate for Somerset and that we do not need additional legislation.

What is the County law (Chapter 31 of the Montgomery County Code)? The relevant excerpt follows:

It shall be unlawful to park any commercial vehicle or bus on that side of any public road abutting any private residence...except when such vehicle is actually engaged in loading or unloading passengers, merchandise or materials or when used by the owner or operator actively engaged in work on the premises of the residences...This section shall not apply to a vehicle

involuntarily parked because of mechanical failure or other emergency, provided such vehicle is removed within a reasonable period of time.

Chapter 31 defines *commercial vehicle* as “any motor vehicle and any trailer or semitrailer designed and used for carrying freight or merchandise and every motor vehicle used in any way in the furtherance of any commercial enterprise...Such term does not include a motor vehicle...of a capacity of one (1) ton or less.”

If you want to report an illegally parked vehicle, call the Montgomery County police at 301-279-8000. In case an officer does not respond in a reasonable time, please call the Town Hall.

Making Waves

15 Swimmers Compete in All-Star Meets

By Sarah Morse, Swim Team Representative

Fifteen swimmers attended the last meets of the season, competing in the All-Star competitions on August 3 and 4. The All-Star relays are for the top 8 teams in each event in the Montgomery County Swim League, and the All-Star individual meet is for the top 16 swimmers in each event.

Four teams were invited to the All-Star relays. The boys' 14-and-under 100 medley team surprised the competition by shaving 2 seconds off their seed time and finishing 4th. Michael Young, 14, swam back stroke, Kevin Young, 12, swam breast, Matt Bookman, 9, swam fly and Joey Kathan, 8, brought it home swimming freestyle. The boys' 13-14 200 M medley team of Michael Young, Michael Lape, Toby Kathan and Nicky Kessler held on to their 4th place seed despite the absence of original team member Jacob Heller. The girls' 9-100 M medley finished a nice 6th. Leah Loversky, Stephanie Krynitsky, Kristen Merkl and Lilly Farrell swam in this event. Also representing Somerset was 9-10 boys' 100 M medley team with Freddy Mondale, Duncan Kessler, Tom Belikove and Matt Bookman.

All individual All-Star swimmers had fabulous races, exceeding their seed place in each event. Competing in the last event of her Somerset swimming career, Katie Steller, 18, finished 12th in the 15-18 category. Leah Loversky, 10, swam back and fly, finishing 9th and 10th, respectively. Joey Kathan finished 14th in the boys' 8-and-under 25 M breast stroke, exceeding his seed position by 2 places.

Team Ends Regular Season in 4th Place

The regular season ended on July 27 with the divisional championship. Somerset finished 4th, scoring 781 points. Several swimmers excelled. From his 4th place seed position, Joey Kathan dropped 2 seconds to finish first in boys' 8-and-under 25 M freestyle with a time of

18.70. Julia Hecht, 15, also had a terrific day, exceeding her seed place in all of her races. Dropping seconds from her times, she moved from 10th to finish 7th in free and IM. Seeded 4th in fly, she finished an impressive 3rd for a bronze medal.

Showing that breast stroke swimmers run in families, Esther, 13, and Isaac, 19, Sorenson had great races. Esther dropped 2 seconds to come in 3rd in the girls' 13-14 50 M breast stroke. Isaac dropped 3 seconds to win the boys' 9-10 25 M breast.

Toby Kathan, 13, and Michael Young, 14, swimming their best times, dropped from their seed positions to finish 5th and 2nd, respectively, in the boys' 13-14 200 M individual medley. Tasha Belikove dropped a second to finish 3rd in girls' 8-and-under 25 M butterfly.

Mainstays TK Kessler, Katie Steller Graduate

The swim team also ended the social season on July 27 with its annual banquet. After the prerequisite afternoon thunderstorm, the weather cooperated for a glorious evening. It was an especially emotional night for the team, as we graduated two long-time swimmers — Tristan (TK) Kessler and Katie Steller. TK has been a mainstay of the team since 1992. Katie has been swimming All-Star times in her yellow smiley cap since 1991.

Both were honored with coaches awards, pewter mugs and collaged kickboards that documented their swimming careers. In team tradition, TK and Katie passed their swimming torches to Adam Bookman and Maurie Kathan, asking them to continue the fine swimming that Somerset is known for.

Coaches Award Special Trophies

The coaches honored 4 other swimmers with special trophies. Toby Kathan and Merrill Fortier received awards for spirit. Joey Kathan and Esther Sorenson got trophies for most improved swimmers.

Coaches also recognized each team member with a personalized award. To name just a few: Yap and Border children got the summer tour award recognizing their extensive travel. Brooks Lape and Toby Kathan received Mr. Mop and mop jr. awards for the splendid heads of hair they have grown this summer. Mark Berry got the Mr. Data award for his knowledge of team statistics. Zoe Loversky was super seven in recognition of the great swimming she has done as a 7-year-old.

Team members also received trophies for the points they made at the A-meets and relay carnival. A 1st place earned 6 points, 2nd 4, 3rd 3, 4th 2 and 5th place 1 point.

The following swimmers were in the 25-point club, making from 25 to 49 points during the season: Miles Batson, Jacob Heller, Mark Berry, Nicky Kessler, Ryan Whitescarver, Brooks Lape, Freddy Mondale, Tasha Belikove, Kelley McLaughlin, Sarah Sullivan, Julia Hecht, Lena McLaughlin, Hannah Levin, Alexandra Lis-Perlis and Esther Sorenson.

In the 50-point club were Zoe Loversky, Toby Kathan, Jack Berry and Tristan Kessler.

Four swimmers were in the 75-point club: Katie Steller, Clare Hanlon, Bess Pickar and Matt Bookman.

5 Swimmers Accumulate 100 Points

Making over 100 points were Leah Loversky, Michael Young, Kevin Young, Joey Kathan and Adam Bookman.

Parents are an essential part of swim team operations. It takes at least 36 parents to run a meet. The swim team would like to thank each and every parent for making the season possible. A special thank-you goes to Melanie Krynitsky, who managed to organize the banquet despite the fact that she was in Florida at the time. Last-minute details regarding the food were handled by cell phone while she was at Disney World on the Haunted House ride. Thank you to all Melanie's helpers who made it possible.

The 2003 division assignments have been made and Somerset will remain in the K division. Seeded 4th in the division, we will be swimming Inverness Forest, West Hillandale, Hillandale, Old Farm and Montgomery Square.

Brown Bag Lunches Will Go Quarterly

By Council Member Jeffrey Slavin

Several weeks ago, the Mayor, former Council member Anne Proctor and I hosted another "brown bag" lunch for residents interested in talking about Town issues, renewing friendships, making new acquaintances and enjoying good food! A nice group attended. We had interesting conversations on topics such as neighborhood watch kudzu and the Somerset deer population (which led to scheduling the deer/raccoon workshop in the Town Hall on September 9).

Residents would like us to schedule these get-togethers on a regular basis, so we have decided to hold them quarterly. The next lunch will be set for November. Watch for the notice in a future *Town Journal*.

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

School Is Open

School is back in session starting August 27. Please drive carefully, make complete stops at our stop signs, watch for the children and obey crossing guards. Also, yield to oncoming vehicles if cars are parked on your side of the street. Remember that the speed limit throughout

Town is 25 miles per hour. Lower advisory speeds are posted at speed humps and several other points where 25 m.h.p. would be excessive.

Back to School Classic 8-KM Race

Don't forget the 8-kilometer race through the streets of Somerset sponsored by the Somerset Elementary School PTA on September 29. The intersections of Dorset and Cumberland Avenues with Wisconsin Avenue will be closed from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Recycle Bins

Please be sure you wash out your blue recycle bins occasionally. If they are not relatively clean, our trash haulers can refuse to pick them up.

Town Trees

Street and park trees are under stress due to lack of rain and a low water table. While the Town staff is working diligently to keep the parks watered, we need your help in keeping our street trees alive. Alligator bags, when available, have been placed on trees requiring special attention. Please help by watering trees adjacent to your property.

You may have noticed leaves dropping from zelkovas. Town zelkovas are on Surrey and Warwick. Maturing zelkovas have an insignificant fruit - a small drupe, measuring only 1/16" across, which ripens in the fall. Due to non-typical weather this year, fall is arriving earlier - acorns, walnuts and other "seeds" are maturing more rapidly than usual. For some unexplained reason, Town squirrels have found the zelkovas' drupes particularly tasty. Upon harvesting the drupes, they are discarding the trees' leaves onto the ground. Once more traditional nuts have ripened, hopefully the squirrels will leave the zelkovas alone.

Permits Granted

The following permits were issued by the Mayor during the past month:

Nancy Hooff, 5516 Uppingham Street, to erect a picket fence on one side of her back yard and a stockade fence along her rear property line.

Dan Banner, 5407 Uppingham Street, to replace his existing back yard fence with a Wyngate style fence.

Legislation

At the August 5 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Approved legislation amending the Town Code to formalize the practice of the Vice President of the Town Council reviewing canceled checks returned from the bank.
2. Approved legislation amending the Town Code to increase rental rates for the Town Hall meeting room as follows, to be effective September 1:

Residents, 5 hours.	\$50 (No change)
Non-residents, 5 hours.	\$200
Commercial, 1 hour.	\$25
Additional hours	\$20 (Residents & Non-residents)

(Vote: Eldridge and Slavin for; Frankel and Gubser opposed. Mayor Behr voted in favor to break the tie.)

3. Dropped consideration of proposed legislation to amend the Town Code to restrict parking of commercial vehicles, trailers, buses and motor homes on Town streets. (It was determined that the County Code provision, which the Town has adopted, sufficiently covers this issue.)
4. Withheld legislation amending the Town Code to establish rules and rates for private use of the Town tent pending additional input from the Swimming Pool Committee.

Council Activity

At the August 5 regular meeting, the Council:

1. Renewed Town membership in Montgomery Municipal Cable Television by contributing the entire franchise fee payment from the County, which is based on the number of Somerset cable subscribers.
2. Approved a resolution authorizing the Somerset Elementary School PTA's request to close the Wisconsin Avenue entrances on September 29 from 7:45 to 9:30 a.m. for their annual 8-kilometer race.
3. Authorized expenditure of up to \$4,000 to retain Yankee Clippers to do hand pruning in the Town parkland.

4. Approved a building permit for Patty Friedman and Blair Levin, 4811 Grantham Avenue, to construct a shed in their back yard subject to planting shrubs that will eventually screen the Koffsky side of the shed or moving their redwood tree to the same side of the shed. (Vote: Eldridge and Gubser for; Slavin opposed; Frankel abstained.)
5. Accepted the Security Committee's report and directed the committee to review the list of recommendations and come up with an action plan addressing the priority of each recommendation.
6. Authorized the Undergrounding Committee to obtain engineering proposals for designing a plan to bury conduits under Town streets for future undergrounding of wires and cables.
7. Approved a change to the Personnel Policies Manual for Town staff to limit fiscal year carryover of annual leave to 15 days with no required use by December 31.
8. Took no action on the purchase of a Green Machine sweeper from Applied Sweepers, Inc. for \$21,000 pending more information.

The *Town Journal* is the official publication of the Town of Somerset, Montgomery County, MD.

Post Office address: 4510 Cumberland Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. It is edited by the Mayor.

MAYOR

CLERK-TREASURER

Walter J. Behr, 4809 Grantham Ave., 301-654-1258/654-0224 Tom Carter

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

TOWN HALL

Judy Frankel, Council V.P., 5528 Uppingham St., 301-657-8875 Open 9 to 4:30

Tom Eldridge, 4806 Essex Ave., 301-656-3354
3211/Fax 301-657-2773

301-657-

Peter Gubser, 4517 Cumberland Ave., 301-654-5137
www.townofsomerset.com

Web site:

Richard Kessler, 4914 Cumberland Ave. 301-654-2699
clerk@townofsomerset.com

E-mail:

Jeffrey Slavin, 5706 Warwick Pl. 301-654-6767
Maryland Relay

TTY users call

Deadlines: Ads, September 18; Copy, September 20

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council

Tuesday, September 3, 2002 - 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of minutes of the August 5 regular meeting – 7:30.
2. Confirmation of Mayor's appointments of Lorrie Barse, Christopher Lane and Stan Weiss and reappointment of Antonia Farrell to Swimming Pool Committee for three-year terms. – 7:35.
3. Action authorizing special trash pickup Friday, October 11 – 7:40.
4. Action on extension of building permit for Barton Rubenstein, 4819 Dorset Avenue, for four months – 7:45.
5. Action on building permit application by Patty Friedman and Blair Levin, 4811 Grantham Avenue, to add to the kitchen in the front and add a screened porch to the rear of their house – 7:50.
6. Action on building permit application by Tom and Roseanna Haley, 4810 Cumberland Avenue, to add front and rear porches and two-story addition to the west side of their house – 7:55.
7. Mayor's report – 8:00.
8. Development/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 8:15.
9. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:25.

10. Introduction of amendment to Town Code to clarify requirement for two authorized signatures on Town checks – 8:35.
11. Introduction of Town Code amendment to impose fee for extension of building permits – 8:40.
12. Introduction of Town Code amendment to eliminate requirement on tree removal applications for signatures of neighbors who cannot see subject tree(s) from their property – 8:45.
13. Action on payment of \$250 per year dues to Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights – 8:50.
14. Report by temporary committee chairperson Lesley Simmons and action on Chevy Chase Historical Society request for financial assistance from Town for archives relocation plan – 8:55.
15. Action on policy and rates for rental by residents of Town tent – 9:10.
16. Action on policy and rules for use of Town swimming pool for private parties – 9:30.
17. Action on purchase of Green Machine sweeper from Applied Sweepers, Inc. For \$21,000 – 9:35.
18. Action on building permit application by Paul Knight, 4808 Cumberland Avenue, to renovate front porch and replacement bay window – 9:45.
19. Confirmation of Mayor’s appointment of George Wyeth to Audit Committee – 9:50.
20. New business – 9:55.

Flora and Maury Atkin, Uppingham Street, are looking for neighbors reasonably fluent in Russian and/or Yiddish. They will be hosting a cousin from Moscow who speaks no English. Please call 301-656-1492 if you can help.

Classifieds

Classifieds Continued

Celebrate Montgomery County's Founding

On Sunday, September 8, help celebrate Montgomery County's 226th birthday at the Beall-Dawson House Historical Park, 103 West Montgomery Avenue in Rockville from noon to 5 p.m.

Meet an 18th Century Maryland "Ranger," listen to the story of slaves trying to escape to freedom aboard ship, tap your feet to Civil War music or just enjoy some birthday cake. Young and old can explore the County's history through exhibits by local historical groups, living history presentations, videos, an archaeological dig, tour of the house or historical games. Good food and good entertainment abound at this community birthday party.

Parking is available at the City of Rockville lot on East Middle Lane and a free shuttle bus will take you to the park, two blocks away. The event is co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and the Montgomery County Historical Society. For more information call 301-762-1492 or visit www.montgomeryhistory.org.

Obituary

Former Resident Lucile Ursell Dies at 90

Lucile Christman Ursell, formerly of Falstone Avenue, died on August 5 from complications related to Alzheimer's disease. She was 90.

Lucile and her husband, Erich, were among the first residents of "new" Somerset, having moved here in 1950. She remained here until 1999, when she moved to the Collington Life Care Community in Prince George's County.

She is survived by her children, Philip Ursell and Anne Lewis, and four grandchildren.

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