

Volume 48, No. 2 August 19, 2003

[Index of Journals](#) | [Town Office](#) | [Home](#) | [Email Town Hall Staff](#)

Mayor's Den

By Walter J. Behr

Should 'Pool House' be Added to Mandate

Of Town Hall Renovation Committee?

At the August Town Council meeting, Council member Tom Eldridge introduced an amendment to the mandate of the Town Hall Renovation Committee that would change the title to "Mandate of Pro Tem Town Hall and Pool House Renovation Committee." Discussion and action on the proposal is scheduled for 7:45 p.m at the September 2 Council meeting.

The amendment would increase the committee membership from seven to nine, including "a resident living in the area of Warwick Place immediately adjacent to the pool." Members of the existing committee would, if they wish, continue to serve on the reconstituted committee without further action by the Mayor or Council. Also, the first alternate on the existing committee would, if he desires, become a regular member.

If approved, the committee would evaluate the structural integrity of the bathhouse as well as the Town Hall. Also, the committee would be required to develop specific recommendations in addition to cost estimates for any proposed work.

The following sentence would be added to the mandate: "In considering how best to meet the Town's future administrative, meeting and recreational needs [the committee shall] include within the scope of its review the pool house facility and the surrounding land owned by the Town."

Texts of the approved mandate and the proposed amendment are available at the Town Hall.

Everyone Invited to 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, 18 new families have moved in. So, once again, it's time for the annual welcome party where old resident greet new residents who have moved in more recently. This year, it will take place at the SOMERSET POOL on Sunday, September 7th, from 4-6 p.m. in the rear under the tent. Bring your favorite CDs, and then relax with a glass of wine or soda and other light refreshments provided by the Town.

Prior Town resident and renowned puppeteer Nancy Edson of "Nanny Goat Productions" will entertain the children with a puppet show while the adults socialize. Please call Bonnie Lewin (301 907-4772), Alan Dock (240 497-1848) or Jeffrey Slavin (301 654-6767) if you have questions or want to help with set-up and clean-up.

Demolition of Somerset School Imminent

Somerset School as we know it could be demolished any day now possibly before receipt of this Town Journal. Asbestos has been removed, tape has been placed on trees to be saved, a stormwater management permit has been issued, gas service has been disconnected and the site has been secured with a six-foot fence and locked gates.

Several additional steps must be taken before the County will issue a demolition permit. Electric power must be severed, and water and sewer service must be abandoned. Super silt fences must be installed; sediment traps and earth dikes must be built. Also, trees that will remain must be root pruned. ("Sanitation" pruning of branches may take place either before or after the building is razed.)

As mentioned in last month's Town Journal, once demolition occurs, 20 or more dump trucks will make 100 to 150 trips a day, 2000 loads in all, to haul away debris from the building and dirt from major grading of the site. This intense activity and inevitable annoyance will last an estimated two months. If all goes well, it should end before Thanksgiving, and construction of the new school should start.

Any questions or complaints about the project should be addressed to our volunteer Town representative, Sandra Hughes, by e-mail: sandrahughes@erols.com. Please put "school modernization" in the subject line so that Sandra will recognize as legitimate an e-mail from an unfamiliar sender.

If you prefer the telephone, call Tom Carter at the Town Hall or me at 301-654-1258. Also, we will broadcast important problems arising from the modernization on our Town e-mail network, so if you are not already a subscriber, you may want to call Tom and sign up.

Parents: Please stress to your children that they are not permitted inside the fence. They could sustain an injury. The superintendent of the project has already reported, that groups of young people have ignored the "Keep Out" signs and been in harm's way near huge trucks and other heavy equipment.

Tot Lot Equipment Going to Another School

Six years ago, the Town of Somerset spent \$22,000 for a large climbing apparatus, a fire truck, a jeep and three other pieces of equipment for the Somerset School tot lot on Warwick Place. This week Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) workers removed the equipment and will reinstall it in a substandard public school playground.

It took months and several high level MCPS employees to decide the fate of the play pieces. First, we were told that it all would have to be destroyed because it did not meet standards of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). At this point, we consulted with experts who agreed that the equipment does meet ADA guidelines or would with a few very minor modifications. One of the experts, at our request, convinced MCPS of this, and we were told that we could take the equipment since the contract for the school modernization includes all new pieces for the Somerset playgrounds.

At this point, we got a recommendation from the Swimming Pool Committee for placement of the equipment (some near the pool, some elsewhere). We then got bids for moving and reinstalling everything, and the Town Council was scheduled to make a decision at the August meeting. Shortly before the meeting, MCPS advised us that they wanted the equipment after all for a school with an inadequate playground.

My personal feeling is I'm glad that we played a part in improving a substandard playground in another part of

Montgomery County.

Progress at Dorset/Wisconsin Entrance

Realignment of the north corner of the Dorset/Wisconsin entrance to Somerset is progressing steadily. The new curb and handicap ramp are now in place, making the turn onto Dorset for school buses and other southbound vehicles on Wisconsin a little less difficult.

Because of a number of buried cables, pipes and controls, the contour of the curb and location of the handicap ramp and walk light pole had to be moved a bit from the plan designed by the State Highway Administration. As a result, our landscape architects, Holt Jordan and Melissa Gildea, have redesigned the sidewalk and exact location of the north pillars. The new plan may be reviewed at the Town Hall and will be discussed at the September 2 Council meeting along with the proposal to move the south pillar. This agenda item is scheduled for 9:30 p.m.

Copies of a letter from Holt Jordan listing pros and cons of moving piers and walls about 45 or 50 feet from Wisconsin Avenue are also available at the Town Hall.

Mosquito Count Is Down

The most recent sampling of mosquitoes in the old Little Falls Branch channel between the Town pool bathhouse and the North Park Apartments revealed a very low count only eight mosquitoes compared with 258 found in the previous count. Monitoring of the insects is being done by the County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) at our request.

The low mosquito count in late June was due to a high count of mosquito predators (dragon flies and midge fly larvae). DEP will test the area again before the end of the month. The department

is reluctant to use chemicals to kill the mosquitoes because the chemicals would kill predators at the same time.

Meanwhile, please for your benefit and that of your neighbors continue to be diligent about eliminating even small puddles and pools of stagnant water in your yard.

NEW RESIDENTS

Cumberland Avenue

4520 Javier Del Pino & Sonia Jimenez; Laura & Marta

4915 Lou & Stacie Christopher; Riley, George & Liza

4919 Jack & Lyndsey Gerber; Amanda, Brad & Clayton

Dorset Avenue

4515 Mark & Julie Oxley; Jake & Matthew

4525 Jeffrey Blackman & Laura DeBruce; Luke

4820 Jim Cummings & Julia Jordon

Essex Avenue

4810 Ilze Vipulis; John & Bruno

Falstone Avenue

4810 Curt Holden & Meera Trehan

4814 Behbehani Taher & Hedyeh Esfahanian; Yasmin & Lily

Greystone Street

5516 Knut & Cathleen Lelipold; Catherina & Alexander

5525 Mark Rasmuson & Laurel Elmer

Surrey Street

5603 Sergio Savino & Livia Portugal; Lulisa

Trent Court

4711 Jonathan Diesenhaus & Jill Lesser; Joshua & Simon

Trent Street

5520 Steven & Cindy Arkin

Uppingham Street

5519 Ken Tolo & Patty Elder

5529 Jeff & Barbara Aron; Emily, Jacqueline & Alison

Warwick Place

5608 Steven Guttentag & Stacy Winick; Eli & Oren

Swim Team Finishes Sensational Season

By Sarah Morse, Team Rep

Two momentous occasions marked the Somerset swim team's year – one of our teams took first place in the All-Star Relays, and after a third place finish in the K division, we are moving up to J.

Competing against the eight fastest teams in the second half of the swim league, Somerset easily took first place in the boys 9-10 100 meter medley. With Mark Berry swimming back, Matt Bookman fly, Freddy Mondale breast and Joey Kathan free, they shaved three seconds off their seed time and smoked the competition. The crowd went wild!

Somerset sent three other teams to the All-Star Relays. Brendan Cowie, Lars Sorenson, Cobi Furcolo and Gavin Springer competed in the boys 8-and-under 100 meter medley. Duncan Kessler, Isaac Sorenson, Elliot Lane and Jack Berry dropped two seconds and finished 6th in the boys 11-12 200 meter medley. Mark Berry, Matt Bookman, Isabel Sacks and Hannah Levin dropped a second and finished 7th in the mixed 9-10 100 meter race.

Zoe Loversky was the sole Somerset individual All-Star swimmer. Facing very tough competition, she pulled off a 10th place in girls 8-and-under free, 9th place in fly and 9th in back. Individual All-Stars feature the top 16 swimmers in the league. In some of these races, the competitors are only .01 second apart.

Dolphins Finish Third in Division

The divisional season ended on July 26 with the championship. Somerset finished third after a fierce battle with Inverness Forest. The final score was 818.5 Inverness Forest; 800 Somerset. This finish put Somerset in third place in the K division.

Somerset will move up to the J division next year. In just three years, we have moved from the M division to K and now to J. We will be seeded third. This is the highest rank in the league that anyone can remember. Just seven years ago we were the second-to-last team in the 89-team league. There are 32 teams ranked beneath us now.

The swim team also ended the social season on July 26 with its annual banquet. The weather finally cooperated for a glorious night marked by trophies, trophies and more trophies.

Coaches honored six swimmers with special trophies. Bess Pickar and Colin Losey received Spirit awards. Elliott Lane and Amelie Hecht got the Most Improved Girl and Boy Swimmer awards. Jack Berry and Clare Hanlon received the Coaches award for all-around excellence. The coaches also recognized each swimmer with a personalized award that reflected something special about the individual. To name just a few: Merrill Fortier got the Zoo Keeper award as she keeps the team mascot. Toby Kathan got the Mighty Hulk award recognizing the swollen knee joint that has been troubling him all season.

Trophies Awarded for A-Meet Results

Team members also received trophies for points they made at the A-meets: first place, 6 points; second 4; third 3; fourth 2; and fifth place, 1 point.

In the 25-point club with 25-49 points were Ava Farrell, Jessica Springer, Anna Kingdom, Lars Sorenson, Leni Hirsch, Brooks Lape, Duncan Kessler, Joey Kathan, Bess Pickar, Lena McLaughlin, Maurie Kathan and Alexandra Lis-Perlis.

In the 50-point club were Nicky Kessler, Isaac Sorenson, Colin Losey, Mark Berry, Elizabeth Kingdom, Sophie Mondale, Julia Hecht, Freddy Mondale, Isabel Sacks and Sarah Sullivan.

Five swimmers were in the 75-point club: Zoe Loversky, Clare Hanlon, Toby Kathan, Matt Bookman and Adam Bookman.

Making over 100 points for the team were Leah Loversky and Jack Berry.

Parents are an essential part of swim team operations. It takes over 36 parents to run a meet. The swim team would like to thank each and every parent for making the season possible. It is impossible to list everyone here, but you know who you are.

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

Office Schedule

The week you receive this Tom will be away on vacation. Corrie Morsey will be in the office on Wednesday, August 27, (afternoon only) and Thursday, August 28.

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 Sunday, October 12. The intersections of Dorset and Cumberland Avenues with Wisconsin Avenue and Greystone with River Road will be closed from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. (See enclosed flyer for details and registration form on the back.)

Town Trees and Grounds

Don't forget to help us by watering the Town trees in your yards when no rain has fallen in several days.

Recycle Bins

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

Curb House Numbers

On the September 2 Town Council agenda is action on repainting the street address numbers on the curbs in front of Town residences. These numbers will automatically be painted unless you opt out by calling Tom at 301-657-3211 no later than September 5.

Telephone Books

Many residents received the new edition of the "Yellow Book" for Montgomery County this week. Remember, you may dispose of your old one by simply depositing it in your blue bin for Tuesday pickup.

New Maps

We have a small supply of two brand new State of Maryland maps in the Town Hall, one a road map, the other a bicycle map. Copies are also available at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase

Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane in Bethesda (301-986-4325).

For information on things to see and do in Maryland call 1-800-543-1036. For general information on bicycling in the State, call 1-800-252-8776.

Permits Granted

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

Trees: Markarand Dehejia, 5411 Surrey Street, to remove a dying black gum and an uprooted white pine from his back yard.

David Parina, 5711 Warwick Place, to remove a dead Japanese weeping cherry in his front yard.

David Stern and Tracey Hughes, 5806 Warwick Place, to remove a giant double leader silver maple with cavities from their back yard.

Legislation

At the August 4 meeting, the Town Council postponed introduction of a sledding policy amendment to the Town

Code until the September meeting.

Council Activity

At the August 4 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 River Road and Wisconsin Avenue entrances to the Town on October 12 from 7:45 to 9:30 a.m. for their annual 8-kilometer race.
3. Heard report from Caroline Cooper, chair, on the progress of the Town Hall Renovation Committee.
4. Approved a building permit application for Kevin Mills and Franny Peale, 5521 Uppingham Street, to build an enclosed porch and add to the bathroom in the rear of their house and to renovate the basement.
5. Postponed authorization for the Mayor to sign a settlement agreement with Starpower pending further information.
6. Approved the extension of the swim season for the weekends of September 20-21 and 27-28.
7. Discussed the proposed conversion of the concrete slab in the pool upper parking lot from sand storage to three parking spaces.
8. Discussed the decision by Montgomery County Public Schools to relocate the Town - donated playground School tot lot to another school's substandard playground.
9. Authorized a thorough inspection of Town Hall by an expert building inspector, to be selected by the Mayor.

10. Discussed the status of the reconfiguration of the Dorset/Wisconsin entrance.
11. Changed the Personnel Policies Manual to provide double pay to maintenance employees for holiday and weekend overtime.

TV Channel Back on Air Next Month

By Council Member Jeffrey Slavin

Renovation of the studio for the Montgomery Municipal Channel, located in Kensington, is almost complete, reports Nat Finkelstein, our former Council member who currently represents Somerset on the channel's board of directors. Regular programming should be resuming in September.

Nat serves as Vice President. Almost all of the towns associated with the channel make a financial contribution, including Somerset. Nat is able to help oversee the station's finances and approve the budget.

Nat encourages input from Town residents on the channel's operation, especially in the area of programming. He wants to hear from anyone who has a suggestion about a public event that should be broadcast or even an idea for their own show. He can be reached at 301-654-0322.

On September 9, Nat is scheduled to be confirmed by the County Council as the Maryland Municipal League representative on the Cable Communications Advisory Committee for the County Government Channel (as distinct from the Montgomery Municipal Channel.)

Hearty Welcome to New Neighbors

By Bonnie Lewin

Welcome the Gerber family to Somerset. Lyndsey and Jack and their three children, Amanda, 12 years old, Brad, 9, and Clayton 7, moved to 4919 Cumberland Avenue in June. The Gerbers moved from nearby Chevy Chase Section 3, where they lived for five years, and are enjoying their new home and meeting other Somerset families.

Jack grew up in McLean, Virginia, and graduated from Georgetown University. Lyndsey grew up in Short Hills, New Jersey, and graduated from Sarah Lawrence College. Jack heads a real estate services consulting company. Lyndsey worked in advertising prior to having children.

The children attend Sidwell Friends School. They are sports enthusiasts. Clayton and Brad play baseball, soccer and lacrosse. Amanda plays tennis and lacrosse. The Gerbers also enjoy family ski trips and spending time with their labradoodle, Annabelle.

Check Your Smoke Detector

More American have smoke detectors than ever before. But nearly half don't work! Without a working detector as an early warning device, fire can spread unnoticed through the house, blocking escape routes and filling rooms with deadly smoke. When you install a new battery in your smoke detector, you can always reuse the old battery in a more accessible appliance. While you're changing the battery, be sure to dust or vacuum the inside of your detector.

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 301-657-3211/Fax 301-657-2773

Peter Gubser, 4517 Cumberland Ave., 301-654-3354 Web site: www.townofsomerset.com

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

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

Deadlines: Ads, September 17; Copy September 19

All About People

By Council Member Jeffrey Slavin

ALICE ROWEN (Warwick) proudly reports that her son Daniel, a Somerset native, has been elected to The College of Fellows of The American Institute of Architects. Daniel was selected for elevation to fellowship because of his notable contributions to the advancement of the profession. He received his architecture degree from Yale, has his own firm in New York City and lives in East Hampton with his wife and three sons.

* * *

BOB and TIERNEY SIEGEL (Falstone) are now happily affiliated as sales agents with Gerlach Real Estate of Chevy Chase. They are having a great time working as a team..

* * *

ZOLA DINCIN SCHNEIDER (Warwick) tells me that a new edition of her book "Campus Visits and College Interviews: A Complete Guide for College-Bound Students and Their Families," is now available in local bookstores. The guide includes the "whens, whys and hows" of the visits and interviews, with additional chapters on the shy student, questions for parents and Web advice. Zola has helped many area students make college decisions over the years.

* * *

Congratulations to GAIL and RALPH WERNER (Surrey), whose son Paul got married in June to Aviva Zablow. The newlyweds reside in Silver Spring.

* * *

Kudos to LILA SNOW (Essex), who has been nominated to receive an Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award from Brooklyn College. We are all glad that her artistic, comedic and writing talent is once again being recognized.

Mentoring Program Big Success

By Council Member Jeffrey Slavin

Last year, as part of her agenda as Maryland Municipal League President, Kensington Mayor Lynne Raufaste instituted a municipal officials' mentoring program so that newly elected officeholders could receive benefits from experienced persons in the same positions. Because no one better understands how a municipal official feels than another individual who has experienced similar "first-timer" transition, President Raufaste and the League wanted to give its newer members a way to interact and learn from experienced peers.

I volunteered to join the program and was assigned to Edmonston Council member Tracy Farrish, who was elected to her Council over a decade ago. Edmonston is similar in population to Somerset. It is located in Prince George's County, nestled between Hyattsville and Bladensburg. The Town has its own police force and some commercial areas.

Councilmember Farrish was the first black person elected to its Council.

As part of the program, I agreed to visit the municipality and attend a Council session. The sessions are run like ours, and there are many similar issues raised by residents. The Town Attorney attends the session, as does the Police Chief. I found the meeting extremely informative.

Ms. Farrish and I have frequently kept in touch by phone and e-mail over the past year. Next month she will visit our Town and appear at the Council meeting. I appreciate the knowledge and "know-how" she has passed on to me and look forward to keeping in touch and working with her on issues of mutual concern after the year is over.

Buy Books and Help Literacy Council

In support of the Literacy Council of Montgomery County and in celebration of International Literacy Day, 10 area book stores are donating a percentage of their receipts to the Literacy Council of the County on Saturday, September 6.

Money raised will provide textbooks, workbooks and free tutoring for County adults who need help with reading, writing and/or speaking English. Last year over 500 volunteer tutors worked with more than 800 students. Since the Council's inception in 1963, more than 8,000 students have been served in the Basic Literacy Program and English as a

Second Language Program.

The following Bethesda book stores are among those participating:

1. Big Planet Comics, 4908 Fairmont Avenue
2. Booktopia, 4701 Sangamore Road
3. Georgetown Book Shop, 4710 Bethesda Avenue
4. Olsson's Books & Records, 7647 Old Georgetown Road
5. Second Story Books, 4836 Bethesda Avenue

M-NCPPC Seeks Feedback on Parks

Beginning September 3 and continuing through the end of September, the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning will conduct a random sample telephone survey of County residents to gather information about recreation and park use and attitudes. Researchers are seeking to determine park activity preferences and to assess residents' opinions on the quality and quantity of park facilities and services.

The Department conducts the "Park, Recreation and Open Space Survey" every five-to-six years. In the 1997 survey of more than 1,000 residents, an overwhelming majority felt that County parks are safe, well maintained and meet the needs of their family. About three-fourths of the residents felt that parks are not too crowded. Some 97 percent were generally satisfied with County parks. Walking, hiking or nature walks in parks were most frequently mentioned activities.

For more information about the survey, call Jeff Zyontz, Chief of Countywide Planning, 301-495-4557. Parks to Implement 'Carry-out' Trash Policy

On December 1, all trash cans will be removed from neighborhood, local, stream valley and conservation parks in Montgomery County. By bringing bags or other containers to carry their trash out of the park, users will become partners with management in improving the park

environment. This summer and fall, most trash cans in these parks will display signs with the campaign theme, "Enjoy your stay! Please take trash away!"

By reducing the amount of trash collected and hauled to a landfill site, the Parks Department hopes to reduce its dumping costs and remove a source of litter by birds and other animals. Last September, the "Carry-in, Carry-out" program began as a pilot in certain parks, including the Capital

Crescent Trail in Bethesda.

The Department encourages park users to practice the three R's: Reduce wasteful habits by purchasing reusable products, avoiding individually wrapped products and using less paper products; Reuse resources by selecting washable and refillable items and containers; Recycle items made of plastic, glass, paper and metal. Similar "Carry-in, Carry-out" programs are already implemented within Maryland's state parks and the National Park Service's

C & O National Historical Park.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council

Tuesday, September 2, 2003 - 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of minutes of the August 4 regular meeting - 7:30.
2. Confirmation of Mayor's appointments of Rob McGarrah and Laura Levine and reappointment of Bridget Cowie to Swimming Pool Committee for three-year terms - 7:35.
3. Report by Caroline Cooper, chair, Town Hall Renovation Committee - 7:40.
4. Action on proposed change in mandate to the Town Hall Renovation Committee to include pool facilities - 7:45.
5. Introduction of Town Code amendment on sledding policy - 8:05.
6. Action on building permit application by Ralph Wooden, 5001 River Road, to put a shed in his back yard - 8:15.
7. Action on building permit application by Ralph Wooden, 5001 River Road, to add a deck to the rear of his house - 8:20.
8. Action on building permit application by Jack and Lyndsey Gerber, 4919 Cumberland Avenue, to build an addition, which is 1 « stories over the existing first story and 2 « stories extending 6' to the right front of their house - 8:25.

9. Mayor's report - 8:30.
10. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset - 8:45.
11. Suggestions and questions from residents - 8:50.
12. Action on proposal to paint house numbers on curbs by Signs & Things for \$3,527.50 - 9:00.
13. Action authorizing special trash pickup for Friday, October 10 - 9:05.
14. Action on settlement agreement with Starpower - 9:10.
15. Action on conversion of concrete slab in pool parking lot from sand storage site to three parking spaces at cost of \$1,003 - 9:20
16. Report on status of Dorset/Wisconsin north entrance and discussion of moving south pillar - 9:30.
17. Discussion of methods to encourage observance of stop signs - 9:50.
18. Action on contract with auditing firm for FY04-FY06 - 10:00.
19. Action on building permit application by Bruce and Rene Lawson, 5502 Trent Street, to expand their kitchen eight feet into their back yard - 10:05.
20. Action on bid to move three trees from Somerset School vicinity at cost of \$2,000, payable in a year if the trees live - 10:10.
21. New business - 10:15.

[Index of Journals](#) | [Town Office](#) | [Home](#) | [Email Town Hall Staff](#)