

Volume 47, No. 8

February 19, 2003

Nomination Day Is March 3

Nominations for three Council members are scheduled for Monday, March 3, at 8:00 p.m. in Town Hall. Incumbents Tom Eldridge, Judy Frankel and Richard Kessler have stated they will run again. Bob Siegel has also entered the contest. Additional nominations may be made by petition of 20 registered voters filed with the Clerk-Treasurer by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, March 10.

Elected officials in Somerset must be:

- Citizens of the United States;
- Residents of Somerset for at least 18 months preceding the election; and
- Qualified voters in the State of Maryland.

A member of the Board of Elections will be at the Town Hall on the same date, Monday, March 3, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m., to register new voters. Residents may also register at the Town Hall during regular business hours and by mail until Friday, March 14. Call 301-657-3211 and Tom Carter will send you a registration form. March 14 is also the deadline for registering in the County (call 240-777-VOTE).

Legal Aliens Vote in Somerset

If you are already registered in Somerset or Montgomery County, you are eligible to vote in Town elections. Legal aliens may register and vote in Somerset, but not in county, state or federal elections. The age requirement is minimum of 18 years by April 1. Residency requirement is 14 days preceding the elections.

Absentee ballots will be available in the Town Hall beginning Tuesday, March 18. Qualified voters who will be absent from Town on election day, or who are incapacitated, may obtain absentee ballots from the Clerk-Treasurer. They may be picked up by the voter or anyone with written authorization from the voter. Ballots will be counted if returned to the Clerk-Treasurer or the Board of Supervisors of Elections by 9 p.m. on election day, April 7.

Voting other than by absentee ballot will be on Monday, April 7, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Town Hall.

If you have any questions about registering or voting, call Tracy Truman, chair of the Board of Supervisors of Elections, at 301-652-4596.

ATTENTION, SOMERSET ARTISTS

Town residents who are working artists are invited to exhibit their paintings, drawing, sculptures and other creations at the Town Hall Saturday and Sunday, June 21 and 22. The show will feature Somerset artists exclusively.

If you would like to participate, call Florence Gang at 301-656-3430 or Alice Rowen at 301-652-4158.

Mayor's Den

By Walter J. Behr

State Agrees to Improve Dorset/Wisconsin Corner

All residents, I'm certain, are aware of the difficult right turn onto Dorset Avenue for cars headed south on Wisconsin Avenue because of the acute angle of the intersection. Many residents may not know that school buses turn right onto Cumberland Avenue rather than take the more direct route to Somerset School via Dorset.

In order to correct this problem, the State Highway Administration (SHA) has agreed to ease the radius of the north corner as well as move the traffic signal pole and controls, provided that Somerset agrees to move the stone entrance on the north side of the intersection. The low bid for dismantling the two-part north entrance is \$2,500. We do not yet have a bid for rebuilding the entrance since we don't know the exact design or location.

Large trucks have the same problem as school buses, and there will be lots coming to, and going from, the Somerset School site starting in late June. In order for the improvement to be completed by that time, we need to make a commitment to SHA promptly, so they can make detailed plans and schedule the construction.

Also, Pepco needs time to plan and execute moving their pole and the variety of wires and cables attached to it before the replacement of the curb and handicap ramp.

The proposal is on the agenda for our March 3 Town Council meeting. Discussion, with action to follow, is scheduled to begin at 9:05 p.m.

Town Pledges \$50,000 for School Landscaping

Many of you know by now that, following lengthy discussion at two meetings, the Town Council voted unanimously to contribute funds for perimeter landscaping at the new Somerset School. Specifically, we will donate \$25,000 for trees and shrubs before September 15 of this year, a deadline imposed by Montgomery County Public Schools. We will pay another \$25,000 for maintenance of the new landscaping over a three-year period after completion of the new building.

Following the February 3 Council meeting, we received a letter from Seth Goldman, president of the Somerset School Educational Foundation, thanking the Town for its "generous support" and promising to include representatives from the Town Parks and Natural Resources Committee in final landscape design and maintenance deliberations.

The following excerpt from the letter explains in detail a subject mentioned briefly at one or both of the Council meetings, namely, how the Foundation has addressed educational inequities within the County:

For the past two years, the Foundation has supported a Community Learning Initiative that seeks to expand Somerset students' understanding of their place within a broader community by linking our students with other students and schools with different community backgrounds and perspectives in cooperatively administered educational activities. In the program's first year, we donated more than \$3,400 to fund two separate projects between Somerset Elementary and Broad Acres Elementary School in Silver Spring, a school that has among the highest number of children from poor families in the County. In one project, third graders learned together about how cities and neighborhoods are organized. In another project, first graders corresponded and then met to discuss books they were reading - the Foundation purchased the books for both classes.

Library Probably Shut Until December

Although renovation of the Bethesda Library will be completed by mid-April, it appears likely that it will not reopen until early December because of budgetary problems.

Howard Denis, the County Council member from our district, has introduced a bill that would authorize \$130,000 in this year's budget. If it passes, the library could open by the end of July. However, it looks like that the bill is doomed since only Denis and Steve Silverman have announced their support.

The Town Council supported the supplementary appropriation that would permit the earlier opening, and I informed the County Council and Executive of our position. In his response, County Executive Doug Duncan expressed regret that the adverse state of the economy forced him to establish a hiring and procurement freeze for the rest of this fiscal year (which ends on June 30). He reminded residents that, until the reopening, they could use bookmobile service at the Bethesda Library site on Fridays and could visit the Davis Library on Democracy Boulevard, which now has Sunday hours "for the benefit of Bethesda customers."

Affordable Housing on Town Council Agenda

For many years, developments of 50 or more units in Montgomery County have been required to include a certain number of affordable units, officially known as "moderately-priced dwelling units" (MPDU's). Because of the critical need for affordable housing, the County Council last year amended the law to require MPDU's in developments of 35 or more units. To compensate developers for less profit on the MPDU's, they are allowed to build more units than the zone would normally allow.

In the past 20 years, the Montgomery County Planning Board has approved MPDU's (and extra density) for 16 developments not large enough to have to include them. Earlier this month, the County Council passed a law granting the extra density as a matter of right to developers of fewer than 35 units who opt to include MPDU's. Our County Council member, Howard Denis, cast the lone vote against the bill, arguing that it hands developers too much flexibility in exchange for too little. "This was very painful," Denis said, "because I support affordable housing."

Council member Marilyn Praisner has introduced a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA), co-sponsored by Denis and Thomas Perez, that would limit the impact of MPDU's on adjoining neighborhoods. The County Council will hold a hearing on the ZTA on February 25, and a County Council committee is expected to consider it on March 6.

Principal provisions of the ZTA are as follows:

- New homes could not be built closer to existing homes than would normally be allowed, had MPDU's not been included.
- Townhouses could not be built next to existing single-family houses, but could be built only in the interior of the new development.
- MPDU's would have to be similar in style and size to the other homes being built in the project.
- No more than 40 percent of the units in a project could be townhomes.

Whether or not to support the proposed Zoning Text Amendment will be considered by the Town Council on March 3. If we are on schedule, this will happen at 9:45 p.m.

Independent Study of Pinhole Leaks Likely

Thanks largely to the efforts of Somerset residents, it look like the Maryland General Assembly will authorize a task force to try to determine what causes pinhole leaks in copper water pipes.

State Senator Brian Frosh is the principal sponsor of the bill and was the lead witness at a hearing by the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee. Another witness from Somerset was Morton Mintz. It was Morton who, last spring, convinced our Town Council to push the General Assembly to sponsor an independent investigation of the cause of the problem. Three other Town residents - Caroline Cooper, Len Harris and Paige Whitley - submitted written statements to the committee.

If the House of Delegates joins the Senate in authorizing the task force, the latter group will investigate not just our water supplier, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, but also other bodies statewide and nationwide. The bill requires the task force to submit its report by December 31, 2004.

WSSC and its consultants have tried but been unable to isolate a single cause of the problem. They believe it may be due to federal clean water regulations. The Environmental Protection Agency has agreed to WSSC's December request to meet, but no date has yet been agreed upon.

Last Call for Scholarship Applicants

April 10 is the deadline for two \$1,500 scholarships offered by the Montgomery County Chapter of the Maryland Municipal League. Preference is given to residents of Somerset and the 20 other incorporated Towns and Villages in the County.

High school seniors and students already in college are eligible, provided they have at least average grades and are involved in more than token community service. Also, they must be planning on a career in government or public service. Applicants must submit an essay on the importance or function of municipal government, transcript of scholastic records and two letters of recommendation.

Announcements and application blanks are available from Tom at the Town Hall, from high school counselors and the Montgomery College Office of Financial Aid.

If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 301-654-1258.

Municipalities Have an Advantage

Earlier this month, I was invited to meet with the Bradley Boulevard Neighborhood Association to explain our program and Town Code provisions to maintain and enhance our tree canopy. Those in attendance seemed impressed and envious of our practices, which they do not have the authority to implement since they are not a municipality or special taxing district.

Their main concern seems to be removal of all or most of the trees on lots that are being developed or redeveloped. My suggestion to them was a simple one that, I believe, most neighborhoods and civic associations would support, namely, amending the County building permit procedure to include trees.

The site plan submitted with every residential building permit application would have to show all trees on the property over a certain size, which ones would have to be cut down and include a reforestation plan. Also, the application would have to show fencing that would be installed to protect remaining trees.

Plan reviewers in the Department of Permitting Services would have authority to reject plans that call for removal of more trees than required to build the addition or new house. They would also be allowed to turn down inadequate tree protection plans.

This is what we do, and I truly believe that a concerted effort would be successful in convincing the County Council to pass legislation that would impose similar requirements in the parts of the County outside of the 20 municipalities and special taxing districts.

Keep Current; Sign up for Town E-Mail

Are you one of the 203 residents who are on the Town e-mail regular network or one of the smaller number of residents who have joined the e-mail emergency network? If not, you may join either one by phoning or, of course, e-mailing Tom Carter at Town Hall. His address is clerk@townofsomerset.com.

Gayley Knight, who is in charge of the networks (as well as the Town Web site), normally activates the regular network once a week. Broadcasts include news of Town special events and committee meetings, delays in trash and recycling collections, crimes in the vicinity, Town Council agenda revisions after the *Town Journal* has gone to the printer, and emergency updates and instructions.

If you feel that this information is more than you want, I urge you at least to become a part of the emergency-only network. Call Tom at 301-657-3211 or tap out an e-mail while you are thinking about it, and be in the know.

Developer Revises Plans for Hecht's Site

Development plans for the Hecht's site in Friendship Heights have been revised, but still do not include a Metro drop-off/pick-up arrangement off of Wisconsin Avenue similar to what is currently in place. At the Town Council's request, I have written the Planning Board, which must approve the new plans, to require a similar "kiss and ride" space for southbound Wisconsin Avenue vehicles.

New England Development expects to start work on the project during the fourth quarter of this year. A brief outline of the proposed project follows:

Program

- 305,000 square feet of retail, including a relocated 180,000 square foot Hecht's store, 50,000 square foot full service supermarket, and 75,000 square feet of boutique retail.
- 433 rental apartments (480,000 square feet) in one U-shaped building with height varying from 4 levels to 15 levels (143' maximum).
- 305,000 square feet of office space in one 11-level building (143 feet) with ground level retail space.
- 20,500 square foot community center, including multi-purpose gymnasium, cardiovascular equipment, aerobics space, locker rooms and community meeting space.
- 4 levels (1,750 vehicles) of underground parking.

Features

- A “town center” layout with a lively mix of uses, all of which are entered from the pedestrian-oriented open-air sidewalks and pedestrian ways.
- All edges of the project activated and attractively landscaped.
- A major public park connected to the pedestrian circulation system, and approximately three of the total eight acres devoted to public open space. This public area will include planting, public art and fountain, site lighting, attractive paving and street furniture.
- Underground, centralized service area for all project components.
- Direct Metro access to short term garage parking for Metro drop-off and pick-up.
- Well lit, secure, user-friendly underground garage.

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

Remember Somerset in Your Tax Returns

Somerset’s largest source of revenue is its share of the State income tax paid by Town residents. But we will not get our share of income taxes unless “Town of Somerset” appears on the Maryland income tax form in the box marked, “City, Town or Taxing Area.” Please remember to complete this section and the “Maryland County” box when filing your taxes. A sample of the form appears below.

Garden Refuse Pickup

J&J resumes twice-a-week collection of garden refuse March 4. Pickups will be on Tuesdays and Fridays as in the past.

Please note that yard waste should either be placed in paper bags or loose in trash cans that are **prominently marked as “Yard Waste”** for easy recognition by the driver. Do not mix with trash or they will leave the entire can! Branches must not be over four feet long or three inches in diameter. Large branches must be trimmed to meet these dimensions. All branches not placed in trash cans must be tied into bundles no larger than 36 inches in diameter.

Some Springtime Activities Require Permits

Spring is coming and in the next few months residents will redo their gardens and beautify their yards. Some will, undoubtedly, plan to expand their houses. Remember, for some things you will need a permit. Below is a list:

1. **Building permit** - needed for any construction or demolition which changes the exterior dimensions of a house or accessory structure. This includes building or enlarging tool sheds and decks.
2. **Tree permit** - needed to take down trees which are four inches or more in diameter, four feet above the ground.
3. **Fence permit** - needed for any new or replacement fence or wall.
4. **Driveways** - repair or repaving of the section of the driveway on public right-of-way as well as a driveway apron may not proceed without a \$300 deposit to insure restoration of Town sidewalks, curbs and other public property. Replacement aprons must meet County standards.
5. **Dumpsters** - may not be parked in the street without a permit.

Informational Brochures

Copies of two Montgomery County brochures - "Healthy Indoor Painting" and "Carbon Monoxide" - are available at Town Hall. Please call Tom or stop in if you are interested in obtaining a copy of either of these brochures.

Permits Granted

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

Judith Baigis and Robert Wachbroit, 4716 Essex Avenue, to remove a large, dying locust in their side yard.

Judy Brociesz, 4820 Cumberland Avenue, to remove a large tulip poplar with wounds damaging the retaining wall next to the driveway.

Hazardous Waste Disposal

Hazardous waste may be dropped off at Georgia Avenue and Spring Street in Silver Spring (behind the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission building) on Sunday, March 16. Other locations and dates are at the Briggs Chaney Park & Ride lot in Silver Spring east of Colesville Road at Gateshead Manor Road on Saturday, May 24; or at the Westland Middle School on Massachusetts Avenue west of Little Falls Parkway on Saturday, June 21. All locations will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

If you are in a hurry and are willing to travel a little farther, the Shady Grove Solid Waste Transfer Station will accept hazardous waste Sunday, March 2.

PLEASE, NO LATEX PAINT: Tens-of-thousands of tax dollars are spent each year disposing of latex paint, which is not hazardous. In fact, latex paint can be safely dried up and put out for regular refuse collection. Simply remove the lid and place it in a safe, well-ventilated area. Cans that are one-fourth or less full will dry in a few days. For cans with greater volume, add mulch, cat litter, shredded paper or waste paint hardener available at area hardware stores.

For more information, call 240-777-6410 or visit www.mcrecycles.org.

Legislation

At the February 3 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Approved legislation authorizing a Town Special Events Committee.
2. Approved legislation authorizing a Batting Cage Committee.

Other Council Activity

At the February 3 regular meeting, the Council:

1. Recommended approval to the Historic Preservation Commission and approved a building permit for Brian Graham and Tori Clarke, 4728 Dorset Avenue, to demolish a small addition to the original house and replace it and the family room with a two-story addition, subject to HPC approval, receipt of a County building permit and declaration of the construction contractor and his Maryland license number. Additionally, approved a removal permit for one tree, subject to declaration of the tree contractor and his Maryland license number.
2. Approved demolition and building permits for Steven Guttentag and Stacy Winick, 5608 Warwick Place, to replace the existing house with a 2 1/2-story house and a 1-car garage integrated into a buried basement, subject to receipt of the County building permit. Additionally, approved the removal of six trees with the requirement to replace three of them and a commitment from the contractor to be as careful as possible working around the remaining trees.
3. Approved a Town contribution of \$25,000 to Somerset School Foundation for landscaping around the perimeter of the new school, payable by September 2003, and an additional \$25,000 for maintenance of this landscaping divided equally over a three-year period from 2005 - 2007.
4. Joined, at no cost to the Town, the administrative appeal by Edgemoor Citizens Association to the Circuit Court challenging the Planning Board decision that changed zoning on the former site of the Arlington Road Giant, permitting a higher building and apartments, with stores underneath, instead of offices and stores. The new zoning does not conform to the Bethesda Central Business District Master Plan.
5. Heard the second monthly report of the Town Hall Renovation Committee.
6. Confirmed the Mayor's reappointment of Norm Schneider as chairman of the Swimming Pool Committee for a one-year term.
7. Confirmed the Mayor's appointments to the permanent Security Committee: 1-year terms - Tom Bowles, Caroline Cooper, Janet Fernandez; 2-year terms - Peter Gubser, Len Harris, Paul Knight; 3-year terms - Birdie Pieczenik, Bruce Tully, Omer Tuncata. Confirmed Birdie Pieczenik as committee chair.
8. Approved the revised contract with Connecting Links for managing the Town Web site under which the site will continue to be updated monthly, but thoroughly reviewed annually instead of quarterly for a monthly fee of \$350 instead of \$640.
9. Withheld action until next month on a recommendation of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights that Somerset oppose a proposed County law that would permit moderate priced townhouses and duplexes in single family neighborhoods.
10. Approved demolition and building permits for Michael and Kathy Hill, 4922 Dorset Avenue, to remove the roof from a room in the rear of their house, add a room on top of it and slightly expand the existing room.

Swim Team Coach Graham Returning

By Sarah Morse, Swim Team Representative

Summer is coming soon. Well, maybe not, but it's never too early to make plans for the swim team.

Ben Graham is returning as head coach and our own Katie Steller will be assisting him. TK (Tristan Kessler) has said "maybe," which worked for us last year. We are looking for one more coach to round out the staff. As always, we are looking for teenagers to coach the mini team. If you coached last year, let me know if you want to do it again. If you're interested in coaching for the first time, let me know, too.

The season schedule is set. Somerset swim team will remain in the K division. Seeded fourth, we will be swimming West Hillandale, Inverness Forest, Old Farm, Hillandale and Montgomery Square. We open with an away meet against West Hillandale on Saturday, June 21. The first home A-meet is June 28 against Inverness Forest. There are dual meets every Saturday until the final Divisional championship meet on July 26. The relay carnival for A-meets has not been scheduled, but must fall between July 1 and July 13. For more Montgomery County Swim information, check out their Web site at www.mcsl.org.

The B-meets begin at home on Wednesday, June 25, against Mohican. We also compete Wednesday, July 9, July 16 and July 23, against North Chevy Chase, Little Falls and Eastgate.

The social calendar begins on Friday, May 23, with a welcome-back party and team sign-up. The end of the season banquet is Saturday, July 26, at 6 p.m. Other social events will be scheduled later.

Who May Join the Team?

For those new to the neighborhood, the swim team is Somerset's only Town sponsored sports team. It is open to all swimmers up to age 18 whatever their ability. (No try-outs, but fabulous uniforms for boys and girls. And no speed-o's required for the boys this year. They can wear fashionable "jammers".) We practice every weekday from May 27 to July 25. We have meets on Wednesdays and Saturdays starting in late June. There is also a developmental team, the minis, for kids under 8 who can swim at least 15 yards. These younger swimmers practice only three days a week in the afternoon.

So when you're making your summer plans, leave time for the swim team. Whether you're here for three weeks or the whole season, whether you can practice three time a week or everyday, we want you on the team. You can't have a community team without the community participating. Call Sarah Morse at 301-907-3298 for more information.

The MVA on Wheels will be at the intersection of North Park Avenue and Friendship Heights Boulevard, next to the Friendship Heights Village Center, on Monday, March 24, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The mobile unit offers most of the services available at permanent stations other than driving tests.

Work Session on Sledding Rules

By Council Member Jeffrey Slavin

Many thanks for the numerous letters and calls I have received in response to my article last month about sledding. It appears that most persons would favor some adjustment in the number of days sledding is allowed and the implementation of safety measures.

At this point, I feel the best way to proceed is to hold a public work session so that those most interested can get together to agree on a proposed amendment to the Town Code and/or what rules should be implemented. This meeting has been scheduled for **Wednesday, March 26, from 7:30 to 8:30 at the Town Hall**. For

those unable to attend, feel free to continue to call or write to me at 301-654-6767 or jzslavin@aol.com with any comments or concerns you may have.

Hearty Welcome To New Neighbors

By Bonnie Lewin

This is the first installment of a regular feature about new arrivals in Somerset in an effort to introduce them to their neighbors and assist in making them a part of the community.

Please welcome Barry Miller and Christopher Johnson, 4721 Falstone Avenue, to the neighborhood. Barry and Christopher moved here after some 20 years in Berkely, California. Barry is a city planner in the Office of Planning, D.C. Government with a special interest in long-range planning. Christopher is in the Communications Department of the Internal Revenue Service. He was with Pacific Gas and Electric Company in California. Christopher looks forward to learning more about the Town's underground utility initiative. In their free time, Barry and Christopher enjoy walking Sierra, their Aussie Shepherd.

Silent Movie Star Lived in Somerset

By Lesley Simmons, Chair, History Committee

Did you know that Somerset was briefly home to a star of the silent movies?

Unlike other founders of our Town who were well-known for their important work at the Department of Agriculture, Miles Fuller remains a partial mystery. The history of the Town of Somerset written by Dorothy O'Brien and Helen Jaszi in 1977 notes:

Little is known of Miles Fuller except that he resigned his position as Chief Clerk in the Bureau of Animal Industry in 1889. Later he operated a business school at 11th and New York Avenue...The school trained secretaries for government service and was delightfully called "The Drillery." Miles Fuller built 4723 Dorset Avenue....

The History Committee recently discovered more about the Fuller family. Miles Fuller, an attorney, was said to be a direct descendent of Edward and Samuel Fuller, who came to Plymouth Colony on the *Mayflower*. The Fullers had four children, three girls and a boy. They built their Somerset home in 1893-94 and sold it in 1900. Miles died two years later at the age of 44.

Earned \$500 a Week in 1912

It was one of Fuller's daughters, Mary Claire, born in 1888, who was to bring fame to the family. She became one of the most popular stars of the silver screen, earning an impressive \$500 a week starring in -- among others -- the very popular 1912 Edison series *What Happened To Mary?* and its sequel *Who Will Marry Mary?* By 1920 Mary Fuller had given up film making to pursue music and painting.

The Fuller home no longer exists. The Fullers sold it in 1900 to Edwin and Ann Howell, and for many years it was rented to the DeCoursey family, who bought it in the 1940s. The house was sold in 1950 to Fred W. Turnbull, who was the Town's Mayor from 1956 to 1958. He was well-known for playing his bagpipes on the gracious porch and the spacious lawns. The Fuller house was old to a developer in 1965, demolished and three new houses were erected on its grounds. To see a photograph of the house and to find out more about it, visit the Town Website's history pages at www.townofsomerset.com.

To find out more about our Town's fascinating past, mark your calendar to come to *Somerset Now and Then* on Sunday, April 27, from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Somerset Residents' Transportation Needs

By Council Member Jeffrey Slavin

At the last Town meeting, a resident suggested that there may be Somerset citizens in need of better transportation options from the Town to the Metro or shopping areas, especially our older people. Our representative to the Friendship Heights Transportation Management District, Howard Byron, suggested that his group is considering such options as a jitney service along Dorset or some kind of special bus from our Wisconsin Avenue entrance all the way to the end of the shopping area in Friendship Heights D.C. But such plans may prove to be too costly.

Others have suggested that our Town have an organized "ride" program for those in need of transportation to the grocery store or a doctor's appointment.

I would like to conduct a survey of the needs of our Town residents so that we might best address this issue if there is indeed a need. Please write or call me: 301-654-6767, jzslavin@aol.com or 5706 Warwick Place. Every comment or idea will be considered.

Hurry or You'll Miss Cabaret

Adults are invited to dine on delicious Italian food, enjoy B-CC High School music groups and dance to the Marshall White Band for the benefit of the school music department. There is no time to waste as the annual Cabaret takes place Saturday, March 1, from 7 to 11 p.m. at the school, which is at 4301 East West Highway.

Tickets are \$25 per person, \$225 for a reserved table of eight. Make checks payable to B-CC High School Music Department, and mail to Carole Brand, 7011 Fulton Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. If you have questions, call her at 301-657-2547, or send an e-mail to csbrand@erols.com.

You may still get a free kit to test your house for the radioactive gas, **RADON**. Call 240-777-7770, fax 240-777-7752 or e-mail radon@askDEP.com. For more information, check the County Department of Environmental Protection Web site: <http://askDEP.com>.

Kids Ride Free on Buses

Montgomery County's 2-year-old Kids Ride Free program on Ride On buses is being expanded to Metrobuses that operate within the County. All school children, including high school seniors, can ride free between 2 and 7 p.m. from Monday through Friday throughout the year, including holidays and summer months when schools are not in session.

Outside of those specified hours, the regular bus fare applies. Middle- and high school-age students must show their school photo identification card to be eligible. Schools that do not have photo identification cards can issue specially designed Ride On identification cards that must be signed by the school principal. The Kids Ride Free program was established to get youth into the habit of riding public transportation and to relieve the County's roads of the congestion caused by parents shuttling their children between after-school events. Montgomery County will reimburse Metro for the free rides.

For more information, contact the Transit Information Center at 240-777-7433 (RIDE) or visit the Web-site at www.rideonbus.com.

You Have the Right to Write

This is a reminder of your “right to write” the *Town Journal* and have your letter published, subject only to the guidelines below. Letters **will be published**, provided they are:

- About Somerset or vicinity;
- Not repetitive of other published letters;
- 150 words or less;
- Signed (although your name may be withheld if requested);
- Not slanderous, libelous or profane.

Communications over 150 words may be published as submitted, but may be cut as space and readability demand. If you want to make the editor happy, please double-space your contribution.

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

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

CLERK-TREASURER

Tom Carter

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Judy Frankel, Council V.P., 5528 Uppingham St., 301-657-8875
Tom Eldridge, 4806 Essex Ave., 301-656-3354
Peter Gubser, 4517 Cumberland Ave., 301-654-5137
Richard Kessler, 4914 Cumberland Ave. 301-654-2699
Jeffrey Slavin, 5706 Warwick Pl. 301-654-6767

TOWN HALL

Open 9 to 4:30
301-657-3211/Fax 301-657-2773
Web site: www.townofsomerset.com
E-mail: clerk@townofsomerset.com
TTY users call Maryland Relay

Deadlines: Ads, March 19; Copy, March 21

Town Hall Committee Welcomes Input

By Caroline Cooper, Chair, Town Hall Renovation Committee

The Town Hall Renovation Committee has been meeting twice a month and focusing on five tasks:

- (1) Defining priority needs (e.g., administration, assembly, record maintenance, etc.) and secondary needs which the Town Hall should meet;
- (2) Identifying structural and mechanical issues (e.g., heating, air conditioning, etc.) bearing on renovation planning;
- (3) Assessing zoning and related implications of alternative renovation strategies;
- (4) Exploring other relevant issues relating to renovation planning, including current deficiencies/desired capabilities relating to parking; facility flow; building amenities (e.g., bathroom, kitchen, etc.) and general relevant quality of life issues; and
- (5) Developing rough cost estimates of these alternatives.

As the Council provided, the committee membership represents a diverse range of expertise appropriate for addressing these issues which, coupled with additional community input, will, we hope, provide the foundation for a well thought out "blueprint" for assessing the Town Hall's renovation needs and alternative strategies to address them.

We are currently in the process of interviewing individuals involved with the Town's administration as well as reviewing relevant data compiled by the Long-Range Planning Committee. We welcome comments from Town residents regarding issues which are relevant to the committee's mission and, particularly, the functions which they would like to see housed in the Town Hall facility and/or other thoughts they have regarding its renovation. Committee members are: Caroline S. Cooper, chair; Bill Brenner, Tom Carter, Tom Eldridge, Judy Engelberg, Vicki Frink and Bruce Lawson. Committee alternates, who are very active in the committee's work, are: Alan Proctor and Howard Byron.

Help Revise County Charter

The Montgomery County Council and County Executive are accepting applications for membership on the County's Charter Review Commission.

The County Charter was amended in 1976 to provide that a Charter Review Commission be appointed by the County Council every four years. The commission researches and evaluates Charter issues raised by the County Executive, County Council, other government officials and the public. Commission reports are submitted no later than May 1 of every even-numbered year recommending proposed Charter amendments.

The commission is composed of 11 residents of the County, five of whom are appointed from a list submitted by the County Executive. No more than six members may be from the same political party. The chair is designated by the Council and the vice chair by the County Executive.

Applicants should submit letters of interest, including resumes relating professional and civic experience, to the Montgomery County Council, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850, **by Friday, March 7.**

Be Prepared for a Disaster

The American Red Cross recommends that every family keep a disaster supply kit in their home to meet needs for at least three days. Supplies should be stored in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers.

Included: water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil; a change of clothing, footwear; blanket or sleeping bag; first-aid kit, including prescription medications; emergency tools; battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries; an extra set of car keys; credit card and cash or traveler's checks; sanitation supplies; an extra pair of eyeglasses; special items for infants, elderly and disabled family members.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council

Monday, March 3, 2003 - 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of February 3 regular meeting – 7:30.
2. Discussion of financial report – 7:35.
3. Five-Year Fiscal Plan hearing and discussion – 7:40.
4. Nominations for three Council member positions for two-year terms and date for candidates forum – 8:00.
5. Third monthly report of Town Hall Renovation Committee – 8:10.
6. Mayor's report – 8:20.

7. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 8:35.
8. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:45.
9. Action on building permit extensions for James Regan, 5809 Surrey Street; and Walt Auburn, 4719 Falstone Avenue – 8:55.
10. Action on offer by State Highway Administration to ease radius of north corner of Dorset-Wisconsin intersection, provided the Town removes the stone entrance on that side at cost of \$2,500 – 9:05.
11. Action on Swimming Pool Committee's request to remodel the bathhouse office by opening the rear area facing the pool and replacing the wall with a roll-up door at a cost of \$4,500 – 9:15.
12. Introduction of ordinance amending the Building Code, Chapter 6, of the Town Code to require a parking plan whenever it is likely that more than three vehicles will be involved in construction of a project – 9:25.
13. Confirmation of Mayor's appointments to Special Events Committee: One-year terms - Anne Proctor, chair; Joan Rabinor; Jeffrey Slavin. Two-year terms - Alan Dock; Bonnie Lewin; Barbara Marblestone; Sarah Morse – 9:35.
14. Confirmation of Mayor's appointment to Batting Cage Committee: Two-year terms - Laura Kennedy, chair; Richard Furcolo; Chris Lane. One-year terms - Dave Fellows; Kathy Wenger – 9:40.
15. Action on recommendation to support proposed County Zoning Text amendment that limits the impact of new law which permits affordable housing, including townhouses, in single family neighborhoods – 9:45.
16. Action on Arbor Day proclamation – 9:55.
17. Discussion of method by which the Town should set building permit fees – 10:00.
18. New business – 10:10.

Classifieds

