

Simmons Elected, Slavin Reelected to Council

At the Town election on April 1, voters decided to retain Jeffrey Slavin in office for a second two-year term as Council member. Lesley Simmons was elected to the other vacant Council seat. Peter Gubser, who served five terms on the body, did not run for reelection. Walter Behr was reelected Mayor.

The vote count was as follows: Jeffrey Slavin, 267; Lesley Simmons, 212; Alan Proctor 149; Walter Behr, 292. In total, 342 votes were cast.

Thanks to all the candidates for volunteering to serve Somerset. Thanks also to Tracy Truman, Ellie Fink and Bonnie Thomson for conducting a smooth candidate forum and election.

Mayor's Den

By Walter J. Behr

Proposed Property Tax Rate Remains 5 Cents

For the fourth year in succession, I am proposing a real property tax rate of 5 cents on each \$100 of assessed value of house and lot. This means, for example, that the tax on property assessed at \$600,000 would be \$300. The proposed rate of 22 cents for "personal" property, which applies to utility companies and businesses with a Somerset address, also is unchanged.

As you will see in the notice on page 16 of this *Town Journal*, the same tax rate as last year will yield almost \$11,000 more than last year because of a 9.6

percent increase in our assessable base, from \$229 million to \$251 million. (This notice is required by State law.)

A public hearing on the suggested tax rates and budget for Fiscal Year 2005 (FY-05) is scheduled for 8:55 p.m. at the Town Hall Council meeting on Monday, May 3. Tax rates and budget will be adopted by the Council on Monday, June 7.

End-of-Year Fund Balance Over \$900,000

General Fund and Capital Projects Fund proposed budgets are combined and summarized on pages 14 and 15 in this *Town Journal*. Also shown under "OPERATING SURPLUS" is that the budget calls for spending \$569,344 more than our estimated income for the year. Despite this substantial operating deficit, you will see under "END OF YEAR FUND BALANCE" that we will end the fiscal year (on June 3, 2005) with an estimated combined fund balance, or surplus, of \$948,243.

The main reason for the operating deficit is the \$500,000 estimated cost in FY-05 of renovating the Town Hall. This figure is only my guess since, at this point, the Town has not decided the extent or basic design of the project.

Two other sizeable capital expenses projected for the upcoming fiscal year are \$35,000 to replace our 12-year-old Town Truck and the same amount for a pilot program that would bury electric power, telephone and television wires and cables.

Pool Will Cost About \$120,000

While estimates for swimming pool operations and improvements are not up a lot from this year, this valuable Town assets will cost us about \$120,000 in FY-05.

Salaries, of course, are a major expense item. The proposed budget of \$160,000 includes increases of 2 to 6 percent for our office and maintenance staff, averaging 4 percent. Needless to say, this results in increased cost of fringe benefits, \$57,000, up \$7,000 from this year.

Copies of the complete proposed General Fund and Capital Projects Fund budgets, as well as an explanatory memo, are available at the Town Hall and on the Town Web site: www.townofsomerset.com.

Warwick to Be Closed for Sewer Replacement

As a result of several sewage backups, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) has engaged a contractor to replace the 6-inch terra cotta sewer pipe with an 8-inch PVC main in the block of Warwick between Dorset and Essex. (It is possible that the work will have been done by the time you receive this *Town Journal*.)

Depending on what the contractor finds underground, the project could take between one week and, possibly, three weeks to complete. During the working day, which begins at 7 a.m., the 5700 block of Warwick may be closed to traffic most or all of the time. At night, at least one lane will be open.

WSSC has promised to notify the eight residents in the block prior to starting construction. The contractor will hook up the houses to other sewer lines on a temporary basis so that sewer service will not be interrupted.

Another sewer line running downhill between 5701 (Rowen) and 5703 (Tully) Warwick has also been part of the problem. Rather than replacing it and losing valuable landscaping, WSSC decided to clean it out and reline it. This has just been done.

Town Hall Has Cable Modem

At no cost to Somerset, the cable TV company serving our area, Comcast, has installed a cable modem in the Town office that gives us speedy access to the Internet. This replacement of our dial-up service is provided for in the franchise agreement we signed with the cable company.

Frog, Toad Invasion Will Battle Mosquitoes

Before long, the mosquito season will be here, but you needn't worry about the oxbow in Little Falls Branch between the Town swimming pool bathhouse and the North Park Apartments becoming a breeding ground.

Late last month, the County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) harvested an estimated 50,000 wood frog eggs from the Northwest Branch near New Hampshire Avenue and Route 29 and deposited them

in the low, curved area where "our" creek used to flow. At this time, most of the eggs should be tadpoles, and sometime in May, the tadpoles should become mosquito devouring frogs.

Working alongside the frogs, will be toads, which are a bit more aggressive when it comes to catching mosquitoes. Within the next few weeks, DEP will gather a batch of toad eggs from another project in the Northwest Branch and resettle them in the oxbow. Before the start of summer, the toad eggs should become toad tadpoles and then actual toads.

If the vernal pool (the former streambed) dries up, frogs and toads will shift to the active creek nearby. When cold weather arrives, they will bury themselves in the soil and emerge next spring. Once a month during the warm weather, DEP biologists will monitor the area for mosquitoes.

For further details on DEP's anti mosquito drive, go to their Web site: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dep and then click on West Nile virus on the bottom right of the screen.

Opening Day at the Pool Is May 29

By Josh Bobeck, Chair, Swimming Pool
Committee

If you wander by the pool during the next few weeks, you'll see lots of work going on as we get ready to open for the season on Saturday, May 29. We hope to have an environment where everyone in Town can enjoy swimming, relaxing, meeting old and new friends, picnicking and playing. The pool is operated for the benefit of all Town residents by a professional staff, and it is the responsibility of all residents to help insure that things run smoothly. The pool is heated and should be warm enough for a swim from opening day. As always, if you have any questions concerning some aspect of the pool, either policy or practice, please contact the staff, me or other members of the Pool Committee.

The Town Council has authorized some improvements to the bathhouse that should make the pool experience even more enjoyable than in the past. The changes will create additional usable space in the women's locker room. Improvements include adding soap dishes to the showers for convenience and grab bars for safety. You may have already seen the playground jeep opposite the bathhouse entrance.

Some Rules and Regulations

Questions frequently come up concerning pool usage. The key to a successful summer is to be courteous to others. Complete Pool Rules are available on the Town's Website and at the desk.

Lap swimming is available at all hours the pool is open, including during swim team practice. If you want to use a lane or if they become crowded, please ask the staff to open an additional lane ð except during swim team practice. But remember that lanes can be ð and should be ð shared.

Limited parking is available in the upper parking lot. Bike racks are available. Only disabled residents and guests may use the parking area next to the pool. Except for special needs, it is not permissible to drop off or pick up across the bridge. Remember when backing out of your space that there are small children walking or biking to and from the pool and they may not be watching for you.

There is a beautiful picnic area at the far end of the enclosure, and you are welcome to use it without reservations for a small group. If you want to bring a larger group to the pool, please contact the pool manager so that such events can be approved and so that extra staff can be added if necessary. All food must be brought in along the upper walkway. Food and drinks (other than water) are not permitted on the pool deck. Glass containers are not permitted. The grill is available every weekend from Friday night through Sunday night and on holidays. Otherwise, cooking is not allowed in the picnic area.

The pool staff will keep the refrigerator and freezers stocked with sodas and ice cream, but there will be no other food sold at the pool. Pizza (or other) deliveries can be made to the front desk and the staff will call you when your order arrives. Except for food brought to the picnic area, no food is allowed inside the pool enclosure.

Prior to swimming or diving in the deep end, children under 14 must take a "deep-water test" annually so that the staff can evaluate each swimmer. Please remember that all children in diapers must have rubber pants that keep the diaper in.

Remember to Register

All users of the pool must sign in at the front desk. Although the pool is free to all Town residents, you must sign up, list your household members' ages and supply your picture for identification purposes at the pool. These ID's are kept at the pool to insure that only residents and their guests are signing in and also as an aid to the staff in learning everyone's name. You need to update

your file only if you have added members to your household. Unfortunately, we will be unable to register people at the pool, so please contact Tom Carter at the Town Hall for times you may register there.

Guest passes (\$10.00 for five visits) may be purchased at the pool by check only. As a convenience, passes may be kept at the pool, but you must accompany your guests to the pool when using the passes.

Staff and Committee Members

The staff this year will again be led by Jenny Jaskiewicz, who will be our pool manager. We also have Tristan Kessler ("TK") and Katie Steller returning as pool operators. Returning lifeguards include Adam Bookman, Maurie Kathan, Julia Hoppack, Julia Hecht and Will Dozier. New staff members include Nick Kessler, Willem Lutter and Marisa Moon. We anticipate that this will be a nice mix of old and new staff, with several Town residents working again this year. The pool is again under the excellent management of Bethesda Aquatics run by Chuck Montrie and a new face, his colleague Rob Friebaum.

In addition to me, the committee members for this year are: Lorrie Barse, Adam Bookman, Ann Brown, Bridget Cowie, Toni Farrell, Rick Kessler, Chris Lane, Laura Levine, Rob McGarrah, Sarah Morse and Stan Weiss. I can be reached during business hours at (202) 295-8410 and at jmbobeck@swidlaw.com or at home (301) 961-9699. It is best to try to reach me during the day at my office.

We look forward to another successful summer at the pool. Come join us for the fun.

Swim Team Party and Sign-up May 28

By Sarah Morse, Swim Team Representative

New swimmers, returning swimmers and developmental swimmers: Somerset's swim team, "The Dolphins," starts the season with a **pizza party and team sign-up Friday, May 28, at 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.** Everyone is invited to meet the coaches, ask questions, sign up for the team and buy uniforms. Our heated pool will be open only for the team; anyone interested in joining is encouraged to attend.

Just who are the Somerset Dolphins? The team is a member of the Montgomery County Swim League. It has practices every day in the morning

and afternoon. There are two meets a week (Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings) from June 19 to July 24. We also have weekly social events and an end-of-season banquet.

There are no tryouts for the team. All children ages 5 to 18 who live in the Town and can pass the deep-water test may join. The team's emphasis is on having fun and developing each swimmer. We run several practices during the day so that kids can work practicing into their schedule. And you don't have to commit to the whole season. Even if you can only swim for part of the season, we still want you on the team.

Can't Pass Swimming Test? No Problem

For children who cannot pass the deep-water test, there is a developmental team, the "Minis." Mini swimmers must be between 5 and 7 years old and able to swim 15 yards. They practice three days a week in the afternoon. There is also one Mini meet.

The swim team is the best neighborhood activity for children in Town. Because it takes 36 parents to run a meet, it provides a wonderful opportunity for children and adults to meet their neighbors. Weekly social events help strengthen community ties and integrate the children into the neighborhood. The swim team is fun because so many kids are on it. If you have any hesitation about your child's time commitment or swimming ability, please contact me, (301) 907-3298, or momomorse@hotmail.com. We would like every kid in the neighborhood to be on the team.

Please call me if you can't make the pizza party Friday, May 28, and we'll get you signed up. For more information, check our Website www.townofsomerset.com/swimteam.

Swim Team Alumni Reunion

Swim team alums, save Saturday, June 26, for the second annual alumni homecoming meet. Pick up your complimentary t-shirt, enjoy the meet and then join us for a barbeque luncheon in the picnic area. Bring your suits for alumni vs team member races. Ribbons for everyone. Please contact me at 301-907-3298 or morskathan@msn.com with questions or if you want to time.

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

Found

A set of two keys with religious chain fob was found earlier this month on the fence at 4727 Essex Avenue. If you think they belong to you, call Tom at 301-657-3211.

Special Trash Pickup May 14

The Town Council, at its April 5 meeting, approved a special trash pickup on **Friday, May 14**, for residents who have large items that cannot go in the regular trash collections. The Town provides this service twice a year at no cost to residents. Those wishing to participate need only notify Tom at Town Hall no later than **Wednesday, May 12**. This will be your reservation for the special collection service by our contractor, J&J Inc. **ITEMS WILL NOT BE PICKED UP WITHOUT A RESERVATION.**

Special trash should not be placed at the curb earlier than the night before the pickup. Special trash is defined as

refrigerators, washing machines, dryers, freezers, stoves, hot water heaters, other major appliances; furniture or parts thereof; large toys, bicycles, swing sets (broken down into smaller parts); bathtubs, sinks and toilets; and iron pipe, gutters/down spouts and fence pieces under six feet long. If items are in bundles, they must be light enough for two men to carry.

Lawn mowers and other power equipment must be emptied of gas and oil. Refrigerators and freezers must have the Freon removed by an authorized agent and tagged appropriately. Propane tanks must be removed from grills.

Items that will not be picked up include: parts of junked cars, boats or trailers (including batteries and tires); loose glass; firewood, tree stumps, tree limbs or lumber; bricks and concrete blocks; paint cans; flammable or hazardous liquids or solids (including propane canisters); ammunition or explosives; large rocks; and dead animals.

Don't Dump, Donate Program

Montgomery County has a program to recycle usable construction materials for use in low-income housing. If you have any, you may

take them to the Shady Grove side of the Transfer Station at 16101 Frederick Road in Derwood between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Hazardous Waste Disposal

Hazardous waste may be dropped off at the Briggs Chaney Park & Ride in Silver Spring east of Colesville Road at Gateshead Manor Road on **Saturday, May 22**, or at the Westland Middle School on Massachusetts Avenue west of Little Falls Parkway on **Saturday, June 19**.

The following materials will be accepted between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.: pesticides, oil-based paint, brake fluid, fuels, herbicides, solvents, antifreeze, photographic chemicals, paint thinners, motor oil, auto batteries and household batteries.

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 of 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 hardware stores.

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

Grasscycling

Several copies of a grasscycling video are available at the Town office for your use. The video demonstrates the benefits of leaving your grass clippings on the lawn. Please call Tom at 301-657-3211 if you would like to borrow one.

Parking

Please refrain from parking cars opposite other residents' driveways. Drivers who park in these locations not only inconvenience their neighbors who are trying to back out onto the street, but also place their own vehicles in greater likelihood of damage.

Please report all illegally parked cars directly to the police at 301-279-8000. You do NOT have to give your name to file a report.

Permit Granted

A tree permit was issued by the Mayor during the past month to Alan and Anne Proctor to remove a leaning mulberry in their back yard and a dying, small oak in their front yard. (Building permits are approved by the Town Council.)

Legislation

At the April 5 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Introduced legislation to increase the fine for construction noise violation to \$500.
2. Introduced legislation to authorize the Mayor to issue citations for parking violations.
3. Introduced legislation to add two stop signs at the intersection of Cumberland Avenue and Devon Lane.
4. Introduced legislation to require contractors to post Town noise and parking regulations at construction sites in Town.
5. Introduced legislation to clarify requirement for residents to clear snow and ice from their sidewalks.

Council Activity

At the April 5 meeting, the Council:

1. Transferred \$1,000 from General Fund Contingency to General Fund Leaves for repairs to leaf vacuum.
2. Reelected Judy Frankel as vice-president of Council for a one-year term.
3. Postponed agreement on special responsibilities of Council members until all Council members are present.
4. Set the spring large item pickup by our trash hauler on Friday, May 14.

5. Set the September Council meeting date for Tuesday, September 7.
6. Confirmed the Mayor's appointments to the Special Events Committee for two-year terms Ð Anne Proctor, chair; Jeffrey Slavin; and Phyllis Wiesenfelder.
7. Confirmed the Mayor's appointments to the Batting Cage Committee for two-year terms Ð Dave Fellows, Jeffrey Blackman and Kathy Wenger; also Richard Furcolo as committee chair.
8. Confirmed the Mayor's appointments to the Security Committee for three-year terms Ð Tom Bowles, Caroline Cooper, Janet Fernandez and Robin Schwartzman; also, Birdie Pieczenki as committee chair.
9. Heard a report from Caroline Cooper, chair, on the progress of the Town Hall Renovation Committee. The committee's recommendation for the project architect will be presented at the May Town Council meeting.
10. Approved landscaping and drainage plans for the area near Wisconsin/Dorset entrance and authorized the committee to go out for bids on the two projects.
11. Approved a building permit for James and Virginia Mahoney, 4905 Cumberland Avenue, to enclose their porch and add a second story above it, extend a portion of the rear, add a deck to the rear and change the front entry.
12. Postponed action on the Pool Committee's recommendation to install a second basketball hoop at the lower pool parking lot for young children.
13. Approved the bid of Rolando Sequeira to paint and make minor renovations to the pool bathhouse for up to \$9,000.
14. Approved the Pool Committee's recommendation to retain the guest fee for Camp Summerset participants at \$1.50.

A Approved the Pool Committee's recommendation to waive pool guest fees for Somerset School class parties, provided that the PTA pay the cost of necessary staff.

16. Heard the report by Howard Byron, Lighting Committee chair. The committee recommended installing trial high-pressure sodium lights along a section of Essex Avenue. The Town Council will address this at the May meeting.
17. Dropped consideration of traffic studies.
18. Recommended approval to the Historic Preservation Commission and approved a Town building permit for Clifford and Tammy Mendelson, contract purchasers of 4807 Cumberland Avenue, to replace the existing one- story wing

and deck at the rear of their house with an extension of the basement, a two-story addition and porch. Also approved the removal of three trees.

19. Decided against a suggestion that the swimming pool be opened one week before Memorial Day at a cost of \$1,500.

20. Approved a contract with Camelot Property Services to have streets swept for \$2,150.

21. Authorized expenditure of an additional \$1,143.91, increasing the total expense to \$21,143.91, for rebuilding the Dorset/Wisconsin entrance. (Frankel and Simmons for; Slavin opposed; and Kessler abstained.)

Add to Your Town Directory

Patricia Elder and Kenneth Tolo, moved into Town last year. They live at 5518 Uppingham Street, and their telephone number is 301-657-9602.

Play Ball!

By Richard Furcolo, Chair, Batting

Cage Committee

The Batting Cage Committee has scheduled a public meeting at the Town Hall on **Tuesday, May 18**, between 6 and 7 p.m. All Somerset residents are invited to attend, meet members of the committee, ask questions, submit ideas, etc.

If you have questions, or can't attend the meeting but would like additional information, please contact me at (301) 718-4562.

Brown Bag Lunch on Tuesday, May 25

By Council Member Jeffrey Slavin

The quarterly "brown bag" lunch will take place Tuesday, May 25, from noon to 1 p.m. at the Town Hall. The Mayor and I are planning to attend and will be ready to discuss Town issues or anything else of interest. All residents are invited.

Don't forget to bring a sandwich or salad to share, maybe some chips or pretzels and a drink. New recipes or food ideas are encouraged.

As we are always trying to expand the core group of attendees, it would be great if each regular brought a neighbor who hasn't attended in the past. For further information, call me at 301-654-6767.

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A Chance to See, Be Seen and Be Heard

By Birdie Pieczenik, Chair, Security Committee and Howard Byron, Chair, Street Light Committee

At its meeting on Monday, May 3, the Council will vote on whether to undertake a demonstration project involving street lights in Somerset. This is the logical follow-up to the conclusions reached by both the Security and Street Light Committees and a perfect opportunity to conduct a short-term pilot study in which everyone in Town can take part.

We are proposing to take one street in Somerset, such as Essex Avenue, and place a sampling of high pressure sodium (HPS) bulbs on 10 existing Pepco poles starting at Warwick Place. We recommend four 70-watt bulbs, then five 100-watt bulbs, with one 150-watt bulb at the intersection of Essex and Surrey for a trial period. Everyone would be encouraged to drive, walk, skate, jog, smooch, whatever, during the night hours and see how they like the lights. After residents have had time to call, write or e-mail the Council, we will regroup at a Council meeting to discuss the proposal, and then the Council will decide.

There is nothing to lose. The duration of the experiment will be short. Your own eyes will tell you how you like the proposed lighting (whether for walking or driving under it). After experiencing HPS, you will know whether we should convert to it throughout Somerset or stay with mercury vapor.

The cost for the experiment is minimal. If the consensus is to return to the existing mercury vapor bulbs, the contractor will do so with a full refund for the installation of the new lights and only a small hourly charge to replace the old bulbs.

The full report of the Street Light Committee can be seen on the Town Website (www.townofsomerset.com); this will provide a clear understanding of the state-of-the-art in street lighting for security and safety and the impetus for the Council to request this study. Examples of the proposed

lighting can be seen throughout Kenwood and on every street from Drummond Avenue up to Bradley Boulevard.

We look forward to seeing you at the Town meeting to discuss this demonstration and are even more eager to SEE Somerset through the eyes of every resident after a short-term field experiment!

Should We Make Our Lights Much Brighter?

The Town Council has before it a proposal to change the Town's streetlights. The proposal would both replace the current mercury vapor lights (bluish) with high pressure sodium (orangish) ones, and would roughly triple the brightness. I am concerned that the costs of this proposal may exceed the benefits.

First, the supposed benefits. Although safety and security have been advanced as reasons to do this, I am aware of no accidents on our streets or sidewalks due to lack of light. I go out virtually every night to walk my dog. I do not feel the lack of light on our streets and sidewalks in general, although there are perhaps a few dark spots in Town that could use brightening. I think the greatest risks we face are from daytime burglaries and from people who speed and blow through stop signs, problems that will not be helped by brighter lights.

Next, the costs. The change would cost approximately \$30,000, not a significant sum as a percentage of Somerset's overall budget and one we could well afford. But we must consider other factors as well, including aesthetics and light pollution. Personally, I find the proposed orangish sodium lights far less attractive than the current blue ones, even though the blue ones are considered "old technology." Also, I am very concerned that lights three times brighter than our current ones placed on the same high poles in our Town will increase significantly light pollution into homes, something that is unpleasant and difficult to screen out. I also am concerned that lighting up our streets three times more than we do now will make them feel like a modern parking lot and will diminish both the small-town feel of Somerset and our privacy. Thus, I am worried that any incremental gains in safety and security may be outweighed by the costs in money, aesthetics, light pollution and loss of small-town feel.

Because I do not think any previous surveys of residents conclusively addressed this issue and that the views of most people in Town are still not known on this topic I urge residents to speak up on this important issue

before the Council acts. The residents of Somerset, not the "experts," should decide how much and what kind of light they want on their streets.

Council

Member Tom Eldridge, Essex Avenue

Strongly Supports Streetlight Trial

I strongly urge a demonstration of the proposed streetlights with a "trial of trial lights" evening.

A demonstration will let each of us see what the well-written report (available on our Website) describes. At the April Town meeting, we heard and saw a fascinating look at the efficiency, including the "glare into our homes" concern, of upgrading our street lighting. The Town pays for its street lighting and it is not inexpensive. Newer fixtures are more energy conscious. And kudos to the committee for negotiating a net price based on the hourly rate of the contractor!

The volunteer residents have spent hours fulfilling the Council's request for a look at our street lighting by giving monthly oral and written reports. While there may be personal issues involved with new lights, surely a test run is a good way to view what the Council put in motion.

Gayley Knight,

Cumberland Avenue

Landscape Plans for Dorset/Wisconsin Entrance

By Corrie Morsey, Chair, Parks & Natural Resources Committee

The Parks and Natural Resources Committee is very excited with the landscape plan designed by Melissa Gildea of Jordan Honeyman Landscape Architecture for the north side of the Dorset/Wisconsin intersection. The design beautifully complements the existing woodland edge on the south side of the entrance. It incorporates many native plants and contains something of interest throughout the entire year, not just the growing season.

A separate plan also addresses drainage problems, which surfaced this winter. A drainage pipe will be installed, a section of the sidewalk elevated, considerable grading done and plant materials incorporated to eliminate the existing situation. Also, stone steps are being placed on the north side to create access to Capello Park, which should stop the pedestrian traffic through the lawn, which is contributing to the erosion.

The plans, which were presented to the Town Council at its last meeting, have gone out for bids. The committee is asking the Council to fund the projects at the May meeting. We are hopeful of getting the shrubs, trees and plants in the ground before it gets too hot. A color rendering of the plans, plant list and pictures can be seen at the Town Hall. Additionally, the plans have been put on the Town Website.

ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

BOB and TIERNEY SIEGEL (Falstone) are pleased and excited about their daughter **SHANNON**'s upcoming bat mitzvah on May 8. They want to publicly thank **VARDA DANIELS** (also Falstone), whose expert tutoring skills in Hebrew have been a great help.

Along the same line, **ROBERT SAUL LEIKEN** (Greystone) made parents **NANCY MILLS and SAM LEIKEN** proud at his bar mitzvah this past February, which was celebrated at Adat Shalom followed by a beautiful reception at our own Town Hall.

VICKI MALONE (Essex), received a Student Achievement Award at the Corcoran College of Art and Design this month. Vicki finds it amusing to be a "middle-aged woman" in school with "a bunch of green-haired 18-year-olds!"

LOUISE KUPELIAN (Falstone) has two upcoming piano gigs that many will want to attend. The first will be May 14 at the Friendship Heights Village Center at 1 p.m. On May 30, Louise will perform her own composition, "Theme and Variations on Happy Birthday", at the 10 a.m. service at Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ on Westmoreland Circle. Call 301-652-0879 for details.

Another Somerset performing artist, **CYNTHIA WORD** (Uppingham), will dance with her company, Word/Dance/Theatre, in "My Mother's

Gate: Body and Earth" May 1 and May 2 in the evenings at Dance Place in Northeast Washington. Call 202-269-1600 for tickets.

Finally, don't forget the reading and book signing of **LESLIE SILBERT's** new best-selling novel, "The Intelligencer," on Sunday, May 2, 5:30 Ð 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall. Leslie is the daughter of **EARL and PAT** (Essex).

Welcome Julia Jordan and Dr. James Cummings to the neighborhood. They moved to 4820 Dorset Avenue, the house formerly owned by the Chodoff family. Julia is an attorney in the litigation department at Sullivan and Cromwell and Jim, who is a major in the U.S. Army, is in his second year of a three-year fellowship in infectious diseases at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Julia grew up in Cleveland, and Jim grew up in Scranton. They were married in August.

Jim graduated from the University of Scranton, where he majored in biology. He and Julia met while they were students at Georgetown University. Julia graduated with a degree in government and went on to study law at Case Western Reserve University. She spent four years as an Assistant District Attorney in Manhattan before joining the New York office of Sullivan and Cromwell. She relocated to the Washington office over the summer to continue her litigation practice. Jim graduated from the Medical School at Georgetown. He started his Army career in 1993, with training in internal medicine at Walter Reed. He has been conducting research on vaccines for malaria and other tropical diseases and has spent time in Africa. He has also taught internal medicine at Duke University and has served on the internal medicine staff at the Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Julia and Jim have two dogs, a Lab named Max and a mutt named Molly. In their spare time, Julia enjoys walking the dogs and reading, and Jim enjoys kayaking and mountain biking.

Youth Sought to Serve on Advisory Committee

Young people who would like to help make a difference in the lives of youth throughout the County are invited to apply to serve on the County Executive's Youth Advisory Committee.

Applicants must be in the 7th grade or above, and under 21. Members earn student service learning credits. The deadline for applying is June 4.

The Youth Advisory Committee plans countywide alcohol, drug and violence-free middle and high school events such as the battle of the bands, movie nights and pool parties. The committee also works to strengthen students' voices in the schools through youth speak-outs and contact with County Government. Another part of the committee's mission is to help eliminate violence, alcohol and other drug use, and help fight racial discrimination through multicultural education.

For more information or an application, call 240-777-6961.

Support Youth Services in D.C. Neighborhoods

A new community center has opened at Faircliff Plaza East, an apartment complex in Columbia Heights (14th Street) of Washington, D.C. Residents at Faircliff are low-income, primarily single mothers, children and seniors on fixed incomes. An after-school program provides tutoring, computers skill and field trips, funded through grants, donations and volunteers. Faircliff Community Center Association is the non-profit (501c3) which provides services, job skills and computer training for the kids and adults at Faircliff.

Four years ago, my husband and I started a company to strengthen urban communities by developing affordable housing and partnering with tenants.

Renovations and a new community center have transformed this property and made it safe again. Open-air drug dealing, along with violence, is gone. Residents are proud of their apartments and community center, which allows them to host activities such as parenting classes, a prayer service and after-school program. But we need help.

I am the director of FCCA and ask for your assistance. If you want to make a tax deductible donation, make out your check to FCCA and send to: Somerset Development Company, 4115 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 107; Washington, D.C. 20016. If you have questions, call me at work (202-363-2090) or at home (301-654-8879). Inner city kids need your support. Better communities in D.C. means a better metropolitan community for us all!

Nancy

Hooff, Uppingham Street

Thank-You to Town Voters

By Council Member Jeffrey Slavin

As many of you took the time to vote on April 1, I want to say thank you for the overwhelming support I received when the results were in. Most importantly, I enjoyed walking the whole Town for the third time and meeting so many residents during the campaign. Please be assured that I will keep your views in mind when taking positions on issues, so keep in touch with me by phone, e-mail or in person.

I look forward to working with our new Council member, Lesley Simmons, and encourage Alan Proctor to stay active because he has a lot of expertise to contribute.

B-CC Language Lab Will Be First in System

Did you know that more than 1,450 of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School's 1,620 students take at least one foreign language and that over 100 students are part of the school's English-for-Speakers-of-Other-Languages (ESOL) program? While students receive excellent classroom instruction, B-CC has never had a language lab to provide in-depth conversation practice and proficiency.

The B-CC Educational Foundation is working to change that and invites you to two events in May in support of our effort. Our goal is \$75,000 by June 1 to enable the school to install a state-of-the-art digital learning lab for use beginning fall 2004. Although many private schools in the area have language labs, the language learning system at B-CC will be the first of its kind in the Montgomery County Public School system.

B-CC's "Antique Roadshow" on Tuesday, May 4, Sloans and Kenyon Auction House, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., 4605 Bradley Blvd. (corner of Wisconsin and Bradley). Wonder what Aunt Edna's vase or Grandma's silver is worth? Bring your valuables for an informal appraisal by an expert. \$10 an item or \$25 for three. Refreshments served.

B-CC's "Beach Reading" Used Book Sale on Saturday, May 15, and Sunday, May 16, B-CC High School. Come buy your summer reading from our large selection of fiction and mysteries by your favorite authors. Great bargains on all books (paperback or hardback) \$1.00.

To make a tax-deductible donation to support the language lab, send your check, payable to the *B-CC Education Foundation*, to P.O. Box 31209, Bethesda, Maryland 20824-1209.

TOWN OF SOMERSET NOTICE

OF A PROPOSED

REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Town Council of the Town of Somerset proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2004, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 9.6%, from \$229,006,482 to \$250,905,910.

2. If Town of Somerset maintains the current tax rate of \$0.05 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 9.6% resulting in \$10,950 of new real property tax revenues.

3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$0.046, the constant yield tax rate.

4. The Town of Somerset is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The Town of Somerset proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.05 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 8.7% higher than the constant yield rate and will generate \$10,950 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 9:00 p.m. on May 3, 2004, at the Somerset Town Hall.

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged.

Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call 301-657-3211 for further information.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council

Monday, May 3, 2004 - 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of the April 7 regular meeting_ 7:30.
2. Discussion of financial report _ 7:35.

3. Presentation of certificates of appreciation to Norm Schneider, former chair of the Swimming Pool Committee, and Laura Kennedy, former chair of the Batting Cage Committee _ 7:40.
4. Confirmation of Mayor's renomination of Howard Byron for a second three-year term as Somerset representative on the Friendship Heights Transportation Management District Advisory Committee _ 7:45.
5. Action on recommendation of Town Hall Renovation Committee to retain architect _ 7:50.
6. Action to authorize funding for landscape plan for the vicinity of the Wisconsin/Dorset entrance _ 8:05.
7. Action on building permit application by Alan and Anne Proctor, 4900 Cumberland Avenue, to install a hot tub in their back yard _ 8:20.
8. Recommendation to Historic Preservation Commission and action on building permit application by Jeffrey and Dana Macher, 4725 Cumberland Avenue, to replace their existing carport/family room with a two-story addition, including a garage and basement, and to replace the rear deck, also action on application to remove a large tree _ 8:25.
9. Mayor's report _ 8:35.
10. Development/plans in the vicinity of Somerset _ 8:40.
11. Suggestions and questions from residents _ 8:45.
12. Public hearing on Mayor's proposed budget and property tax rates for FY-05 _ 8:55.
13. Hearing and decision on application by Somerset House Management Association et al, to amend their existing Town Permit to Discharge Water into Vinton Park to provide, among other things, authorization for County to carry out on behalf of the permit holders certain responsibilities imposed by the permit _ 9:10.
14. Action on recommendation of Street Light Committee to install 10 high pressure sodium (HPS) lights between 4700 and 4815 Essex Avenue to help residents decide if they prefer HPS lights to the existing mercury vapor lights _ 9:40.
15. Action on Town Code amendment to increase fine to \$500 for violation of construction noise limitations and to provide for enforcement of Noise Ordinance by County and Town _ 9:55.

16. Action on Town Code amendment to add two stop signs at the Cumberland Avenue/Devon Lane intersection _ 10:05.
17. Action on Town Code amendment to require contractors to post Town noise and parking regulations at their construction sites in Town _ 10:15.
18. Action on Town Code amendment authorizing Town to issue citations for parking violations punishable by a fine of \$100 _ 10:20.
19. Action on Town Code amendment to clarify requirement for residents to clear snow and ice from their sidewalks _ 10:30.
20. Action on Swimming Pool Committee recommendation to subsidize water aerobics for adults _ 10:35.
21. New business _ 10:45.

Somerset Now and Then

Don't forget Somerset Now and Then on Sunday, May 16, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Town Hall. Join the History Committee and Somerset architect Bill Brenner for a discussion on the architecture of New Somerset, share memories and stories about life in Somerset and, weather permitting, take in a walking tour. Bring you Somerset photos to share.

Classifieds

Pet Directory Underway

Diane McCabe Smith of Dorset Avenue is at work on a pet directory and welcomes all information and suggestions. To place your dog or cat in the directory, e-mail Diane at fitisinfreelancewriting@comcast.net.

Thanks to her for undertaking an ambitious project.