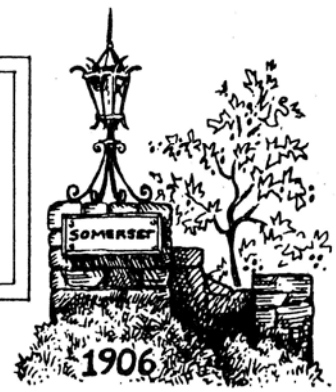




SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 49, No.10

April 18, 2005

Inside:

Tax Notice	1	Project Ladybug	13
Calendar	2	Swim Team News	13-14
Proposed Budget.....	3-4	Pool Opening.....	14-15
Mayor's Den		Residents' Letters	
Proposed Tax Rate	5	Bethesda Garden Club	15
Graffiti.....	5-6	Donations wanted for Afghani people	15
Move back to New School	6	On My Mind.....	15-16
Unblocking the Box	6	Spring Brunch	16
Friendship Heights	6	Spotted at the Creek	16
District 16 Delegation Town Hall	6	County News	
Town Hall Tidbits	7-8	Parking tags for people with temporary disabilities	17
Legislation.....	9	Applicants sought for county commissions	17-18
Council Activity	9-10	National Public Works Week photography contest	18
Budget Committee Proposal.....	11	Calling Somerset Youth Leaders.....	18
Working Session on Town Hall Renovation	11	All About People.....	18-19
Committee News		Preliminary Agenda	20
Pool Survey Committee.....	12	Classifieds	Pull Out
PNRC (Erosion problems persist)	12	Odd Job Helpers.....	Pull Out
History Committee (Centennial Book Project)	12-13	Pool Calendar	Pull Out

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, 2005, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 10.4%, from \$257,305,327 to \$284,006,923.

2. If Town of Somerset maintains the current tax rate of \$0.05 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 10.4% resulting in \$13,351 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 \$0.045, 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 11.1% higher than the constant yield rate and will generate \$13,351 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 2, 2005, 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.

Calendar

Thursday April 28 – Town Hall meeting on Friendship Heights

Thursday, April 28 – Town Hall Meeting on Development Issues (Chevy Chase)

Friday, April 29 – last date to opt out of curb numbers

Monday, May 2 – Town Council meeting

Week of May 2-6 – Street sweeping (park in driveways)

Tuesday, May 10 – Council working Session on Town Hall renovation

Friday, May 13 – Special Trash Pick Up

Saturday, May 14 – Hazardous Waste Disposal

Thursday, May 19 – Journal Deadline Ads

Friday, May 20 – Journal Deadline Copy

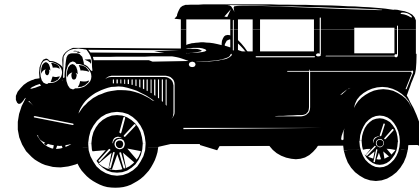
Saturday, May 21 – Pool Opens

Saturday, May 21 – Dolphins' Breakfast and sign-up



July 4th is just around the corner

Howard Byron is planning the very popular antique vehicle show and parade for our July 4th festivities. If you own a pre-1985 vehicle and would like to show it off on July 4th, please call Howard at 301-656-9496.



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. This issue edited by Lesley Simmons.

MAYOR

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

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Judy Frankel, Council V.P., 5528 Uppingham St., 301-657-8875
Tom Eldridge, 5605 Warwick Pl., 301-656-3354
Lesley Simmons, 4723 Cumberland Ave., 240-497-1876
Richard Kessler, 4914 Cumberland Ave., 301-654-2699
Jeffrey Slavin, 5706 Warwick Pl., 301-654-6767

CLERK-TREASURER

Tom Carter

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, May 19, Copy May 20

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006 WITH AUDITED
FIGURES FOR FY-04 AND ESTIMATES FOR FY-05**

REVENUE

<u>Line Item</u>	<u>FY-04 Audit</u>	<u>FY-05 Estimate</u>	<u>FY-06 Proposed</u>
Property Tax Per \$100 Assessed Value	122,135 at .05/.22	134,786 at .05/.22	150,393 at .05/.22
State Income Tax	477,881	495,867	536,550
Highway Users	47,200	51,799	67,030
County Revenue Sharing	30,989	41,660	43,743
Swimming Pool	11,700	10,000	10,000
Tennis	467	450	450
Batting Cage	130	125	125
Interest	17,194	26,510	20,220
Town Hall Rental	20,210	8,500	6,000
Building Permits	6,955	6,200	6,000
Cable TV Franchise	8,917	9,363	9,600
Miscellaneous	733	1,269	769
FEMA	5,699	0	0
WSSC	0	0	196,241
TOTAL	750,210	786,529	1,047,101

END OF YEAR FUND BALANCE

(RESERVE, CUMULATIVE SURPLUS, RAINY DAY FUND)

Percent of Current Year Expense	1,604,892 225.1	1,565,019 189.4	1,608,497 160.3
---------------------------------	--------------------	--------------------	--------------------

Mayor's Den

By Walter J. Behr

Proposed Tax Rate Remains 5 Cents

For the fifth 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 Town tax on property assessed at \$800,000 would be \$400. 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 1 of this *Town Journal*, the same tax rate as this year will yield \$13,000 more next year because of a 10.4 percent increase in our assessable base, from \$257 million to \$284 million. (This notice is required by State law.)

A public hearing on the suggested tax rates and budget for Fiscal Year 2006 (FY-06) is scheduled for 8:50 p.m. at the Town Council meeting on Monday, May 2. Tax rates and budget will be adopted by the Council on Monday, June 6. FY-06 starts on July 1 of this year and ends on June 30, 2006.

End-of-Year Fund Balance Over \$1.6 Million

General Fund and Capital Projects Fund proposed budgets are combined and summarized on pages 3 and 4 in this *Town Journal*. Estimated income for FY-06 is \$83,000 more than planned expenses, which is known as "operating surplus." Our end of fiscal year surplus, or "combined fund balance," should be \$1.6 million.

Please note that these estimates would be thrown askew if the Council modifies the budget before adopting it in June or amends it after it becomes official. Major changes would occur if, for example, the Council decided to proceed with renovation of the Town Hall or a substantial construction project in the swimming pool area. Hiring police would have less of an effect, depending, of course, on the number of hours.

A Few Highlights

State Income Tax is our largest source of income, about two-thirds of the total. The Comptroller sends us a portion of Maryland income tax paid by residents.

WSSC. The water/sewer utility has promised us \$196,000 in lieu of permanent repaving of entire streets after installation of replacement water and sewer pipes.

Salaries. I am proposing a 10 percent increase for our excellent maintenance staff leader, Enrique Cabrera, and five percent for all other employees.

Civic Affairs includes \$8,300 for Somerset School landscaping; \$8,900 for the History Committee and Town centennial events; and \$4,700 for special events such as the July 4th celebration and welcoming party for new residents.

Curbs, Sidewalks. \$50,000 is for repairing cracked and disintegrating curbs and sidewalks. The Somerset School contractor will repair damage caused by its operations.

Erosion Control. \$100,000 is allocated for our ongoing efforts to slow down erosion of Little Falls Branch.

The complete budget may be viewed on the Town Web site, and copies are available at Town Hall.

Graffiti Problem Critical

Graffiti on the swimming pool bathhouse, lower parking lot and back of the North Park Apartments has become a critical problem. The Town and Montgomery County police need your help in identifying those who are responsible. If you know of a suspect, please call police headquarters, 301-279-8000, or call Town Hall, and we will pass on the tip to the commander of the Bethesda station, who is cooperating fully with us.

The area is well lit, but the Town Council has authorized two additional lights to flood the front of the bathhouse. Our Town maintenance men spent most of a day painting over the work of the vandals. Before that, police officers visited the site twice and took pictures. If there is a speck of good news about this serious problem, it is that the police are confident that the graffiti is not gang related.

Move Back to New School Will Begin in a Month

May 17 is the date when Somerset School can start moving to its own new building on Warwick Place from the Radnor holding school off of Goldsboro Road. Officials of Pantech Construction Company have made it clear that as of that date work will still need to be done inside and out, but they have not announced a target date for completion of the job.

Before Montgomery County Public Schools makes the final payment on the \$12 million project, Pantech will have to repair damage done to curbs, sidewalks and lawns. **Therefore, it is important to notify Tom in the Town Hall, in writing, of any damage you are aware of to private or Town property at or near your address.** Please do this as soon as possible.



Neighborhood children have been seen on the site recently despite fences and NO TRESPASSING signs. If you think your child could be involved, please stress that the school grounds are out of bounds so that no one will be injured.

The massive trucks on our narrow streets with accompanying noise, dirt and, sometimes, blockages have been a major inconvenience, but I am confident that when the construction and landscaping are completed, we will all feel fortunate to have the prestigious Somerset School back where it belongs.

Unblocking the Box



The State Highway Administration has acceded to our request for a DON'T BLOCK THE INTERSECTION sign for southbound traffic on Wisconsin Avenue at Dorset. It should be in place by Memorial Day.

Lila Snow suggested that such a sign be erected after being unable to exit Somerset on two green lights because the intersection was jammed with vehicles that, of course, should not have been there.

Progress (?) in Friendship Heights

Somerset residents are invited to a town hall-type meeting at which the developers will describe the status of the two massive projects underway in Friendship Heights. Principals of the Chevy Chase Center and Hecht's will appear at the Friendship Heights Village Center Thursday, April 28, from 7 to 9 p.m. Howie Denis, our County Council representative, is the sponsor.

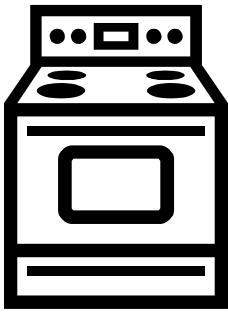
District 16 Delegation Town Hall Meeting

Our District 16 Delegation to the General Assembly will have their annual Town Hall meeting for the public Monday, May 2 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Davis Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd.

Town Hall Tidbits

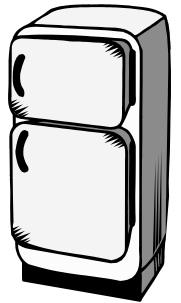
By Tom Carter

Special Trash Pickup May 13



The Town Council, at its April 11 meeting, approved a special trash pickup on **Friday, May 13**, for residents who have large items that cannot go in the regular trash collections. The Town now provides this service twice a year at no cost to residents. Residents wishing to participate need only notify Tom at Town Hall no later than **May 11**. 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.

Curb House Numbers

We are once again planning to repaint 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 April 29.

Street Sweeping

Camelot Property Services will begin sweeping Town streets on May 2. They do not set a schedule and simply come through several times until they can finish the job. Residents are asked to park their cars in their driveways during the week of May 2-6. Houses where they have not been able to clean after that week will receive notices to move their cars.



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 reusable construction materials, 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 (Rte 29) at Gateshead Manor Road on Saturday, May 14.

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 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.montgomerycountymd.gov/siteHead.asp?page=http://www.dpt.com/.

Grasscycling

Several copies of the 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.

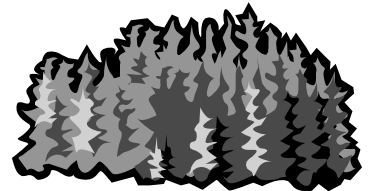
PERMITS GRANTED

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

Trees: Marc Reshefsky, 5403 Trent Street, to remove a dying wild cherry in the back yard.

Jonathan L. Diesenhaus, 4711 Trent Court, to remove a dead holly in his side yard.

Tom Haley, 4810 Cumberland Avenue, to remove a bald cypress in his front/side yard next to his house.



Fences: Josh Bobeck and Suzin Glickman, 5534 Warwick Place, to erect a picket fence in their front yard.

Legislation

At the April 11 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Passed a resolution revoking all of the Town's 1978 resolution granting an easement through the property at 5403 Trent Street to 5001 River Road except the curb cut for 5403 Trent Street.
2. Approved amendments to the Town Code Section 6-308(b), Decisions on Building Permit Applications, and Section 8-208(c), Appeal of [Tree] Permit Decisions, extending the deadline for written Council decisions to 40 days from the date of hearing
3. Introduced two Town Charter and three Town Code amendments to increase fines for removal of trees without a permit from \$400 to \$500 or \$1,000, depending on circumstances.
4. Introduced legislation to amend the Town Code to establish a Budget Committee.

Council Activity

At the April 11 meeting, the Council:

1. Transferred \$1,000 from General Fund Contingency to General Fund Miscellaneous/Engineer for traffic speed surveys.
2. Elected Richard Kessler as vice-president of Council for a one-year term.
3. Agreed on the following special responsibilities of Council members:

Judy Frankel:

- Parks and Natural Resources Committee
- Audit Committee
- Special Events Committee
- Check signing alternate
- Tennis Committee

Richard Kessler:

- Swimming Pool Committee
- Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
- Bank statement reviewer
- Security Committee alternate

Tom Eldridge:

- Security Committee
- Swimming Pool Committee alternate
- Centennial Committee alternate
- Batting Cage Committee



Jeffrey Slavin:

Special Events Committee
 Town Hall Renovation Committee
Town Journal columnist
 History Committee alternate
 Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights alternate
 Budget Committee

Lesley Simmons:

History Committee chair
 Centennial Committee chair
Town Journal editor
 Parks and Natural Resources Committee alternate
 Check signing alternate

4. Set the spring large item pickup by our trash hauler on Friday, May 13.
 5. Set the July Council meeting date for Tuesday, July 5, the September Council meeting date for Tuesday, September 6, and the October Council meeting date for Wednesday, October 5.
 6. Approved a contract with D & A Dunlevy Landscapers, Inc., to landscape the Greystone entrance to Town for \$9,367.00, which includes funds for Jordan Honeyman to oversee implementation of the plan.
 7. Heard a report from Vicki Frink of the Town Hall Renovation Committee discussing the committee's findings and recommendations.
 8. Set a meeting date for May 16 for a work session between the Town Council and the Town Hall Renovation Committee with public participation to allow the Council to question the committee on their findings. (Later changed to Tuesday, May 10)
 9. Hired Ann Bisconti Dyke's company to distribute and compile the resident survey at a cost of \$4,660 with minor recommended changes by Walter and the Town Hall Renovation Committee, but retaining Question 4.
 10. Approved a tree removal permit for Cathy Pickar, 4915 Dorset Avenue, to remove seven Leyland cypress trees and replace them with more substantial trees.
-
11. Continued discussion of hiring police to enforce speed limit and STOP signs in Town. Action on this item will be at the May Council meeting.
 12. Approved a contract with Camelot Property Services to sweep Town streets for \$2,500.
 13. Renewed our contract with Connecting Links for managing the Town Web site for a monthly fee of \$325 (down from current \$350), to include monthly updates and a thorough review annually.
 14. Confirmed the Mayor's appointment of Richard Furcolo to the Swimming Pool Committee to replace Joel Brinkley, who has resigned.
 15. Approved Patrick Keating's request to move a maple tree within the back yard of 4904 Essex Avenue.
 16. Approved a contract with J&S Electric to add two more security lights on the front of the bathhouse for up to \$1,100.
 17. Authorized pool plumbing repairs for up to \$1,900.

Budget Committee Proposed

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

In keeping my promise, at the Council meeting last month, I introduced an amendment to the Town Code to establish a Council Budget Committee. As I mentioned in my column, this follows the recommendation of the Long Range Planning Committee report of several years ago, along with the call by many residents for us to do better overall financial planning, especially where it comes to major capital expenditures. I wrote this amendment to strengthen the Council's ability to perform its oversight function. The Council will discuss it at the May 2 meeting and possibly take action the following month. In the interim, I would welcome the comments and suggestions from residents and thank those who have already expressed an interest.

Council Budget Committee

- (a) The Council shall form a Budget Committee each year, at the first meeting following the election of new members. The Committee shall be chaired by the Vice President of the Council and shall consist of four other members, not more than two of whom shall be elected Council members. Any other members of the Committee shall be residents of the Town. All Committee members shall be approved by the full Council.
- (b) The Committee shall have the following duties:
 - 1. Reviewing the annual budget submitted by the Mayor to the Council and making specific recommendations for increases or decreases on line items or new insertions.
 - 2. Ensuring that the budget process is adhered to under the requirements of the Town Charter and this Code.
 - 3. Making recommendations to the Council, as needed, to ensure that residents are adequately informed about proposed expenditures through timely and appropriate public hearings and through established communications outlets.
 - 4. Making recommendations to the Council on the Mayor's five year fiscal plan.
 - 5. Developing an expertise in budget content and procedures to ensure that the Council performs its oversight functions.

Council to Hold Working Session to hear Town Hall Renovation Committee's Final Report

by Council member Tom Eldridge

At the April 11 meeting of the Town Council the Town Hall Renovation Committee reported that it had concluded its work and would submit a written report to the Council shortly. The Council voted to meet with the Town Hall Renovation Committee at a special meeting now scheduled for Tuesday, May 10 beginning at 7:30 p.m. to receive the final report and to ask questions about its contents.

This is a fact-finding, not a decision-making meeting. The aim is for Council members to meet with the Renovation Committee members to discuss their findings and conclusions and to ask detailed questions about all aspects of the work they have undertaken over the last two years. This will be a working session of the Council. While the agenda will set aside time for residents to ask questions, the Council will conduct its meeting with the Committee without interruption during the working session. The meeting will last about two hours.

Residents are encouraged to submit written questions to the Council prior to or at the start of the meeting to help the Council get the most out of its work session.

Committee News

Pool House Survey

by Josh Bobeck, Chair, Pool House Survey Committee

Within a few days every permanent adult resident in the Town eighteen years of age and over will have the opportunity to participate in the Pool House Survey. As I indicated in last month's article, the Council created the Pool House Survey Committee to survey the residents of Somerset and assess their interest, if any, in renovating and/or replacing the pool house structure to create additional recreational space and amenities at that location, including, but not limited to, an all-purpose room and year-round swimming facilities. The Committee has striven to develop a balanced survey to provide the Council with useful information without promoting a particular viewpoint on the projects the Town should consider. This survey is an important tool that will provide the Council with essential information to help it determine community needs and allocate resources for capital projects. Therefore the Committee urges that you complete the survey. Please return it within two weeks of distribution.

Somerset's Erosion Problems Continue

by Corrie Morsey, Chair PNRC

The Parks and Natural Resources Committee, PNRC, last fall alerted the Mayor and Council that the erosion control work previously undertaken on the creek has proven inadequate. At PNRC's urging, the Mayor arranged a meeting with Dan Harper, Manager of Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection Watershed Management Division and Watershed Restoration Program. On March 30th Dan Harper met with the Mayor, Council members Judy Frankel and Lesley Simmons, and PNRC members Tom Ainora, Jeff Lape and me.

We walked almost the entire length of Little Falls Branch within Town noting places where densely rooted biologists staked into banks had been swept away and were nowhere to be found. Additionally, trees and vegetation planted along the streambed have for the most part not taken hold or have been carried off by the force of water. The thrust of stormwater running through the creek during periods of hard rains has also moved some very large rocks further downstream.

On a positive note, Dan Harper assured us that Montgomery County will repair their portion of the erosion control work. However, the Town will need to do a great deal of additional work. As soon as Montgomery County shares with us the names of engineering/design firms under contract with them, we will pursue obtaining bids for a complete assessment of the erosion problem and recommendations to reverse the situation. In the meantime, Dan Harper has suggested some projects we can undertake this spring that we already have begun to implement.

Little Falls Branch is a conduit for water running downhill from both Bethesda and Friendship Heights as well as within our Town. With increased development in neighboring communities as well as larger structures within Town, the amount of water rushing through Little Falls Branch during storms will only increase. It is clearly evident that erosion will continue and intensify as impervious surfaces shrink.

Centennial History Project Moving Along

by Lesley Anne Simmons, Committee Chair

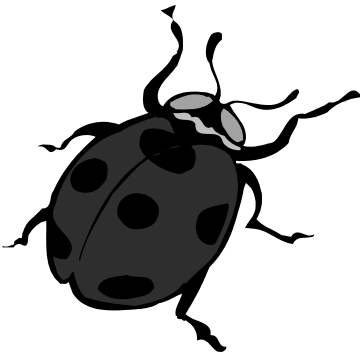
The History Committee has collected more than 100 photographs and written commentaries on them for the history that will be published to mark the centennial year of our incorporation in 2006. We need more! Photographs from any period are potentially useful to us. Although we cannot promise that we will use your photograph, if you have one that you would like us to consider please contact History Committee member Ursula Dehejia at (301) 986-0696 or by e-mail at ursamak@aol.com indicating the subject and date of the photograph and whether you are willing to either donate it, or make it available for copying.

We are particularly looking for pictures (any date from the 1880s – 2000s) of:

1. July 4th picnic and parade
2. Community Activities (garden and Woman's Clubs, Town meetings, etc)
3. Somerset Elementary School's "Back to School Classic" race
4. People playing on the tennis courts
5. the Dog Swim
6. The Swim team – early years and up to today
7. Photographs of new houses in the 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s and beyond
8. The Cicada invasions of 1970, 1987, and 2004 (or before)

Project Ladybug

by Faith and Chip Breen



We are pleased to announce that the Town's Project Ladybug website is up and running. As you come across relevant articles, research, or information, I hope you will share it so we can build our community's knowledge base. The address is:

<http://www.townofsomerset.com/ladybug.html>

The purpose of Project Ladybug is to encourage the use of organic alternatives to pesticides by providing residents with information. One great source of information is Pest Management at the Crossroads (a Consumers Union website). The Pesticides, Human Health and the Environment section – <http://www.pmac.net/pestenv.htm> – is particularly interesting. We hope this Q&A excerpt on the nervous system will encourage you to take time to explore the site:

Q: Can pesticides cause neurological problems?

A: There is a lot of evidence that pesticide exposure is a risk factor for both Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Studies have found higher rates of these diseases in farmers and others exposed through their work or through an accident. There is also suggestive evidence from lawsuits in which doctors have documented neurological symptoms in families that have gone back into homes recently treated for termites or other insects.

Q: What about neurological problems in children?

A: There are some. For example, Japanese scientists recently linked a cluster of nearsightedness in school-children that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s to exposure to organophosphate insecticides. And scientists at the Environmental Protection Agency's Research Triangle Park Laboratory have recently demonstrated that chickens, exposed to these pesticides exhibit changes in the shape and development of the eyeball, which can lead to nearsightedness.

Excerpt from the section titled "Pesticide Impacts on Human Health/ How to Avoid Pesticides - <http://www.pmac.net/cmbnan.htm>

News from the Swim Team

by Sarah Morse

New swimmers, returning swimmers and developmental swimmers: Somerset's swim team "The Dolphins" starts the season at a new time this year. Opening day -- **Breakfast with the Coaches and Team sign-up Saturday, will be on May 21 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.** Everyone is invited to meet the coaches, ask questions, sign-up for the team and buy uniforms. Our heated pool is opened only for the team, so anyone who is interested in joining is encouraged to attend.

You may be wondering just who are the Somerset Dolphins. They are a member of the Montgomery County Swim League. The team has practice every day in the morning and afternoon. There are two meets a week (Wednesday evening and Saturday mornings) from June 18 to July 23. There are also weekly social events and an end of season banquet.

There are no try-outs 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 their practice time 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 want you on the team.

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 3 days a week in the afternoon. There is also one mini meet.

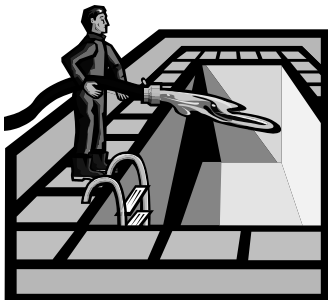
The swim team is the best neighborhood activity for children in Town. Because it takes 36 parents to run a meet, it provides a wonderful opportunity for children and adults to meet their neighbors. Weekly social events help strengthen community ties and integrate the children into the neighborhood.

The swim team is fun because so many kids are on it. If you have any hesitations about your child's time commitment or swimming ability, please contact Sarah Morse, (301) 907-3298, or momomorse@hotmail.com. We would like every kid in the neighborhood to be on the team.

Please call Sarah Morse if you can't make the opening day party and she'll get you signed up. For more information, check out our web site www.townofsomerset.com/swimteam

Pool Opening

by Josh Bobeck, Chair Swimming Pool Committee,



The relatively warm weather we have enjoyed over the last week serves as useful reminder that the Town Pool will open on Saturday May 21. As some of you may know, the Town decided to open the pool earlier than usual this year: one week before the Memorial Day weekend.

For those of us who recall the chilly end of last pool season, you will be happy to learn that the heater has been replaced and the Swimming Pool Committee expects the new heating system to be a major improvement from last season. Our pool management company of the last several years returns again, as do most of the staff.

For those new to Town, please take a few minutes to review the Swimming Pool Rules on the Town website at www.townofsomerset.com. They are designed to make use of the pool enjoyable for all residents and to help keep the pool and deck clean and safe. Here are a few rule highlights based on frequent comments from last summer. Please:

1. Follow the posted rules regarding swim diapers and plastic swim pants for children younger than age four and others not toilet trained, to help keep the pool clean.
2. Do not bring food or drinks onto the pool deck even if you are not eating or drinking it on the deck.
3. Keep all food and beverages in the designated picnic areas off the deck.
4. Note that parents are required to be in the pool and within reach of children who cannot swim and of children wearing flotation devices.

Pool Hours Limited Until School Closes

Generally, Somerset's pool is open every day from the opening weekend through the second weekend after Labor Day. Additionally, the facility is open on weekends only for the two weeks following Labor Day. During school days, open hours are 1:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., and once school is closed, 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Pool hours are 10:00a.m. - 10:00p.m. on Saturdays, and 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. on Sundays. While you can generally count on the pool being open during these times, special events -- including the swim team home meets, a swim team party and an adult party -- may alter the closing times. Please see the preliminary calendar included with this month's *Journal* and watch for signs, bulletin board postings, and on the Town's website for changes in the schedule. If you have any questions or

comments about the pool, please contact the management at the Pool or call me during business hours at (202) 295-8410 and at jmbobeck@swidlaw.com or at home at (301) 961-9699. It is generally easiest to reach me during the day at my office.

Let's have another great summer at the pool!

Letters From Residents

This is a reminder of your right to write the Town Journal and have your letter published, subject only to 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. The Town does on occasion allow a resident to prepare and print, at his or her own cost, a longer piece, which may be mailed with the Town Journal. The content of such correspondences are not endorsed by the Mayor, members of the Town Council or the editor.

Dear Neighbors: Bethesda Community Garden Club will hold their Annual Plant Sale at Bethesda Farm Women's Market on Thursday May 5, a.m. til sold. The sale will feature perennials, shrubs, and herbs from well-tended members' gardens, as well as annuals and a garden "White Elephant" table. Proceeds benefit many community projects, including landscaping the Bethesda and Davis libraries. Wonderful sale!

Lauren Rubenstein (Surrey Street)

Dear Fellow Somerseti: On behalf of Blessed Sacrament Parish, the US Armed Services, and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary, I am gathering donations of various useful items to be sent to the Afghani people to assist them in their recovery from their recent war of liberation and to a better life brought via democracy, personal liberty, and capitalism. Should you wish to donate items, please leave them in the designated box on the front porch of 4808 Essex Avenue on or before Saturday, April 30. Items needed include clothes (all sizes of winter coats, shoes/ boots, rain coats, sweat shirts, socks); umbrellas; plastic utensils (cups, plates, bowls); infant supplies (clothing, powdered formula, diapers, a few toys); art supplies (pencils, crayons, drawing paper, paint, canvas); and medical supplies (cough drops, cotton swabs, band-aids, ace bandages, aspirin, and ice/heat packs). Feel free to include a note from you and/or a photo. For further information, call me at 301-941-8000. Thanks.

Marc Geffroy (Essex Ave)

On My Mind

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

This month I would like to raise four issues that are timely but need lots of input from Town residents before any action is taken.

First, election dates: Under the Charter, which can be amended, each year the Council is required by resolution to set the election date. It must take this action no later than January 15th. The election shall be any day from March 20th through April 7th, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. The board of elections shall keep the polls open from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. or for longer hours if the Council requires it.

Before I was elected to the Council, the election traditionally was set on the same night as the Council's meeting in April. I objected to holding it on this date because I felt it was unfair for candidates to have to choose between

campaigning or attending the Council meeting. Candidates who chose to attend the meeting would deny voters the opportunity to talk to him or her just before voting. I conducted an informal survey and found that no other nearby Municipalities worked in this way.

Thus, for the past two years, I have convinced the Council to set the election on a separate night to the Council meeting. That worked well in 2004 but in 2005 we ran into problems because we had failed to properly verify the dates of public school holidays.

Most public and private schools have Spring vacation in April and thus many families are away. In addition, many residents celebrate Easter and/or Passover, which often occur at this time. Finally, the weather in April is not guaranteed to be warm so that candidates might be inhibited from going door to door to meet the residents. So, my question is--should the Town consider holding our election in the month of May? Let me know.

My second issue relates to the Town entrances. Because the Council has voted recently to fund improvements for the entrances at both Wisconsin Avenue and River Road, some residents are asking why we don't spruce up the Little Falls entrance? It has been suggested that since the entrance sits on public land, which is under the authority of the Park and Planning Commission, we don't have the ability to change it. However, a nearby school has constructed a large stone pillar on parkland, so perhaps an arrangement could be negotiated with the Commission that would satisfy all parties. Town residents' input on this would be appreciated.

Next, I want to again request that all town residents follow the vacancy announcements for our committees, which we will try to publish with a lot of advance notice in the future. If you are interested in serving let the Council know. During the last campaign, I heard many complaints that the "same people" continue to run or serve on most of our committees. That may be true, but in fairness to these hardworking people, we don't really hear from many townspeople when vacancies occur. And incumbents are not often willing to give up positions unless there are others stepping forward. I think that if we better publicize the vacancies, encourage new blood, and let incumbents know that others want to serve, we will get enough turnover to keep our committees energized and well functioning, composed of members of disparate views and talents. Let me know your views.

Finally, in the context of the Town's centennial celebration next year, there was a group of townspeople who wanted Somerset to petition the State of Maryland to issue a special license plate next year in honor of this event. However a minimum number of car owners are required to indicate interest in this for the State to take this action. So far not enough residents have come forward. I think it would be a shame if we didn't take up this opportunity next year so I make one last plea for folks to let me know if they would be interested. For this and all of the issues I have raised, write me at Jzslavin@aol.com or phone (301) 654-6767.

First Spring Has Sprung Brunch

By Sarah Morse

The sun was shining and the flowers were blooming. Spring had indeed sprung. One hundred or so Somerset residents enjoyed brunch, Sunday, April 10 at the first annual *Somerset Spring Has Sprung Egg Hunt and Brunch*. Many thanks to Alice Rowen and Toby and David Kathan for hiding over 250 eggs in the park, to David for the wonderful "spring themed" music and to Alan Dock, my co-chair for the terrific job we did on this party. Start looking for hats now, because next year there will be a hat contest!

Editors Note

Spotted on the Town Creek



Speaking of Spring -- if you're lucky you may spot a pair of Wood Ducks who appear to be taking a vacation at the creek. They are unmistakably beautiful. The male particularly so with his colorful and complex face pattern and boldly patterned iridescent maroon, green, purple, and white body. I have spotted them several times over the last few weeks (and once last fall) from the bridge on Wisconsin Avenue. Heavy hunting and habitat destruction through the early 1900s nearly brought the wood duck to extinction so we are lucky to have these beautiful visitors in our midst. They are also secretive and not often seen. If you spot them, enjoy. But please, do not disturb.

County News

Compiled by the editor

Parking Tags for People with temporary disabilities.

People with temporary disabilities may be eligible for special parking tags that will allow them to use designated handicapped parking spaces at on-street meters and in County-owned parking lots and garages.

Under Maryland law, citizens with temporary or permanent disabilities are exempt from paying parking meter fees. Parking is allowed at no charge for up to twice the maximum allowable time shown on the meter, but in no case longer than four hours.

Only vehicles displaying valid handicap tags or placards may park at a space reserved for handicap parking. To obtain handicap parking tags or special parking placards, visit your local Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) office; go to the MVA website at <http://www.mva.state.md.us/> and click on "About MVA", then "Motorists With Disabilities"; or call the Customer Service Center at (800) 950-1MVA (1682), TTY (800) 492-4575.

Jurisdictions outside of Maryland have different parking meter exemption laws and may not allow free parking at on-street meters or other parking facilities. Check with other local governments to obtain parking exemption information.

For information on parking facilities operated by Montgomery County, contact the Parking Operations Section within the Department of Public Works and Transportation at 240-777-8740, or visit the County website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dpwt.

Applicants Sought for County Commissions

County Executive Douglas M. Duncan is currently seeking applicants to fill positions on the following Commissions:

Commission on Juvenile Justice: Ten vacancies. Two of the vacancies are for partial term positions, expiring in July 2006. Six incumbents are eligible to apply for reappointment. For information click on: <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/Apps/News/press/DisplayInfo.cfm?ItemID=1373>

Montgomery County Commission on Health: Seven vacancies. At least one vacancy must be filled by a provider representative, and six vacancies must be filled by consumer representatives. Five incumbents (four consumers and one provider) are eligible to apply for reappointment. For information click on: <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/Apps/News/press/DisplayInfo.cfm?ItemID=1374>

Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee: Four general public vacancies. Three incumbents are eligible and intend to apply for reappointment. For information click on: <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/Apps/News/press/DisplayInfo.cfm?ItemID=1377>

Youth 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 seventh grade or above and under 21, and reside in or attend school in Montgomery County. Members earn Student Service Learning Credits. The deadline for applying is June 17.

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 speakouts 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.

The committee is sponsored by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and the Department of Health and Human Services Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families. For more information or an application, call 240-777-6961.

National Public Works Week Photography Contest

A photography contest is being held to help mark *National Public Works Week*. The deadline for entries is May 3, 2005.

You are invited to submit a photo entry of a Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) operation, such as road work or transit service, recycling activity, or a public construction project. Winners will receive a US savings bond and recognition at a DPWT ceremony.

A contest nomination form and a listing of DPWT operations can be found at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dpwt or contestants may e-mail the Community Outreach office at dpwt.outreach@montgomerycountymd.gov or call (240) 777-7155 for a copy of DPWT's Resident's Guide to Services and further information about the contest.

Calling All Somerset Youth Leaders

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin



As many of you know, this year I am participating in a program called Leadership Maryland. At the opening session I learned about a program, Maryland Leadership Workshops, Inc. (MLW) that might be of interest to many of the young leaders in town. The current MLW president made an impressive presentation, noting that graduates have consistently achieved incredible success academically, socially and in their extracurricular activities.

MLW brings together accomplished student leaders and those with leadership potential at the middle school and high school level from around the State to network and develop the skills necessary to succeed in all facets of their lives. This program has been in existence since the 50s and there are numerous well known graduates.

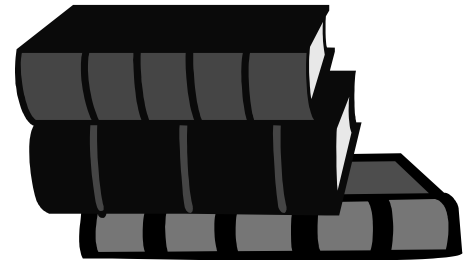
Students participate in a weeklong program during the summer where they 'learn by doing' through team building and peer teaching. The program takes place at McDaniel College in Westminster and there is a tuition fee. It has been endorsed by many prominent people, such as the State Superintendent of Schools.

I urge all students (and parents) to look into this program to see if it would be an appropriate match. More information is available online at www.mlw.org I also have some brochures.

All About People

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

One of Somerset's premier authors, **ELLEN BUTTS** (Dorset), is pleased to announce the publication of her latest biography for young adults, *Fidel Castro*. The book provides information about the Cuban Revolution and the history of Cuba's relations with the U.S., as well as Castro's life. Available in hardcover and paperback, the book can be ordered from its publisher, Lerner Books, through Amazon.com or at local book stores. Ellen and co-author Joyce Schwartz hope to see all of us at a book signing at Politics & Prose, 5015 Connecticut Avenue, NW, from 7-9 p.m. on May 17...On the same day, meet longtime resident **MAURY ATKIN** (Uppingham) at a lunchtime talk and signing of his new book, *Life's Voyage* at the Social Hall of the beautifully restored Sixth and I Historic Synagogue at 600 I Street, NW. There is a fee involved for this event, which is sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington. Call Stephanie Silverstein at (202) 789-0900 for details. Maury will



also be speaking about his book at the Friendship Heights Community Center in July. Details to follow...Lots of great news at the **FINKELSTEIN** (Surrey) household. **ESTHER** and former Council member **NAT** tells me with great excitement that daughter **MAURA** has been accepted 'full freight' into a PhD program at Stanford this fall. Triple congrats are in order because Maura has also been chosen to participate in a PBS show called Texas Ranch House starting in June--they film the group living as if it was 1867--and as she awaits a security clearance for the show she is also preparing for her May graduation from a masters program at Columbia. Not to be outdone, son **MIKE** is getting his undergraduate degree from the University of Vermont in the same month

More information from another home grown Somerset young adult: **CHRIS MALONE** (Essex) who will graduate from Bucknell in the near future as a biology major, and will attend medical school at Tulane after working for a year at the NIH. Nice work....**VICTORIA PESLA KLEINER**, known as 'VICA' and daughter of **LYDIA** (Trent) celebrated her bat mitzvah last month at Fabringen Havurah. Vica attends Tilden Middle School, plays soccer, likes horseback riding and is looking forward to the opening of the Town pool...**ANN BISCONTI** (Greystone) who has generously given so much of her time for our Somerset surveys, reports that daughter **GIULA** and son-in-law **TOM TERBUSH**, who reside in the District, are proud of the recent addition of a second daughter **EMILIA SOPHIA BISCONTI TERBUSH** to the family. Ann says that "Emmy" and her sister **FRANCESCA**, twenty-one months, will be hoping to join the Somerset Swim Team in the future and "taking back those records from the Fabulous Loversky Gang." It seems that Giulia held at least five swim team records for over two decades until **LEAH LOVERSKY** (Warwick), daughter of **FRANK and CATHI DAVIS** starting picking them off one by one!



All residents are cordially invited to *In a May Mood*, a concert of poetry and cello performed by the ever popular **DAVI WALDERS** (Essex) and cellist Doug Wolters, Sunday, May 1 at 2 p.m. at the Chevy Chase Town Hall, 4301 Willow Lane. Refreshments will follow...Law Professor **CHRISTINE HAIGHT FARLEY** (Grantham) was delighted to learn that she has been awarded tenure at American University. Husband **WILLIAM** and children **LIAM** and **AIDAN** are very proud. This is also good news for Somerset because Christine says, "I will now have much more time to attend those Town Council meetings!"

Finally **MAYA WEIL** (Dorset) who grew up on Dorset reports that she is once again living here after many years in Europe and is delighted to be getting married in June to "the most wonderful man" **CRAIG MCCANN**. Best wishes...And until next month, as the weather is getting better I hope we will all do a lot more walking, especially to Town functions, and please everyone fill out and return the survey on the pool house in a timely and complete manner.

PELIMINARY AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL

MONDAY, MAY 2, 2005 - 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of minutes of the April 11 regular meeting – 7:30.
2. Discussion of financial report – 7:35.
3. Report by Caroline Cooper, chair, Town Hall Renovation Committee – 7:40.
4. Recommendation to Historic Preservation Commission and action on building permit application by Michael and Lise Ringland, 4721 Essex Avenue, to add a shed to their east side yard – 7:45.
5. Action on tree removal permit applications by the Town to remove a dying sergeant crabapple from the back yard of 4510 Cumberland Avenue and a diseased oak at 4604 Dorset Avenue – 7:50.
6. Mayor's report – 7:55.
7. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 8:05.
8. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:15.
9. Report by Josh Bobeck on progress of Pool House Survey Committee – 8:25.
10. Action on hiring Chevy Chase Village police to enforce speed limit and STOP signs in Town – 8:30.
11. Public hearing on Mayor's proposed budget and property tax rates for FY-06 – 8:50.
12. Discussion of enhancing safety at crosswalks – 9:10.
13. Discussion of driving visibility hazard from hedge on Town right-of-way at 5410 Trent Street – 9:20.
14. Discussion of use of residents' names on Town Web site – 9:30.
15. Action on two Town Charter and three Town Code amendments to increase fines for removal of trees without a permit from \$400 to \$500 or \$1,000, depending on size of tree and circumstances – 9:40.
16. Discussion of Town Code amendment to establish a Budget Committee – 9:50.
17. Action on contract to repaint house numbers on curbs for up to \$3,500 – 10:00.
18. Confirmation of Mayor's appointment of Laura Long to the Swimming Pool Committee to replace Rob McGarrah, who has resigned – 10:05.
19. Action authorizing up to \$40,000 for new Town truck – 10:10.
20. New business – 10:15.
21. Adjournment – 10:20.