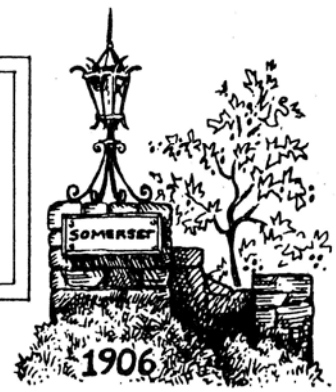




SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



Volume 49, No.9

March 23, 2005

Inside:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Election Update | 1 |
| Candidate Statements | 2-3 |
| Mayor's Den | |
| 5-Year Plan | 3-4 |
| Highlights on Town Web Site | 5 |
| Vacancy on Swimming Pool Committee | 5 |
| Clyde's Reopening | 5-6 |
| Street Lights | 6 |
| Electrical Aggregation | 6 |
| BCC High School | 6 |
| Town Hall Tidbits | 6-7 |
| Legislation | 8 |
| Council Activity | 8-9 |
| Proposal to Hire Police | 9 |
| A New Look for the Greystone Entrance | 9 |
| Pool House Survey Coming Soon | 10 |
| Swim Team Parents Meeting | 10 |
| Project Ladybug | 10 |
| Spring Has Sprung | 11 |
| Meet the Staff – Enrique Cabrera | 11 |
| On My Mind | 11-12 |
| County News | 12 |
| All About People | 13 |
| Classifieds | 14 |
| Preliminary Agenda | 15 |
| Recyclable Blue Bin Items | Pull Out |

Election Update

Please note the date change for the Candidate Forum and Town Elections.

Candidate Forum: Monday, April 4, from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Election Day: Thursday, April 7 from 5:00 – 9:00 p.m.

A special meeting of the Council convened on Sunday March 20, 2005 to discuss a request by several residents to change the dates of the Candidate Forum and election of Council members. The request was made to accommodate those residents who would be out of Town during the public school spring break. The Council agreed to change the date of the forum (earlier scheduled for March 28) to April 4 and of the election to April 7.

Four candidates – Tom Eldridge, Judy Frankel, Jack Gerber, Richard Kessler, are vying for three openings on the Town Council. Voting will take place in the Town Hall on Thursday, April 7 from 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

Absentee ballots will be available in the Town Hall beginning March 21. Qualified voters who will be absent from Somerset on April 7, or who are incapacitated, may obtain absentee ballots from the Town Hall, but it is a good idea to call (301) 657-3211 before coming to the Town Hall. Ballots will be counted if returned to the Town Hall by 9:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Council members elected will be sworn in at the first Council meeting after the election, which will be on Monday April 11. A candidate Forum will be held on April 4 from 7:30 – 9:30 pm. at the Town Hall.

Calendar

Monday, April 4 — Candidate Forum

Sunday, April 10 — Spring Brunch

Monday, April 18 — Journal deadline, ads

Saturday, April 30 — Swim Team Parents Meeting

Thursday, April 7 — Election Day

Monday, April 11 — Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 19 — Journal deadline, copy

Candidate Statements

Tom Eldridge

Since my election in 2001, I have worked hard to improve the lives of Somerset residents and to seek common sense solutions to community problems. While on the Council, I have supported investments in the roads, pool, tennis courts, parks and batting cage. I voted to fund landscaping, as part of the Somerset school renovation, and the Norwood Park playground renovation. I sponsored legislation that protects trees on Town and private property.

I strongly believe the Town should be strategic about its planning, particularly for major capital projects. To that end: (1) I was a member of the Long Range Planning Committee, (2) I proposed the Town Hall Renovation Committee to address the deterioration of that structure, (3) I proposed the Poolhouse Survey Committee to gauge residents' interest in altering or replacing the poolhouse, and (4) I supported the Undergrounding Committee's proposal to develop a strategic plan for undergrounding utilities. The Council has not decided how much to spend on these projects, but we are building a framework for evaluating these competing demands on Town resources.

Finally, I have actively promoted public safety by sponsoring the addition of speed humps to Essex and Uppingham, and supporting other measures, including my current proposal to hire police on a pilot basis for traffic enforcement in Town.

It has been a privilege to serve Somerset. I ask for your support in the election so I may continue to work with you to make our community a better place.

Judy Frankel

Since coming to Somerset in 1967, I have observed many demographic changes that have required the Town to adapt and improve the way it functions.

I have served on the Town Council for 24 years including several terms as Vice President. On the Parks and Natural Resources Committee I have helped to develop landscape and maintenance plans for our parks, forests and swimming and pool picnic area and helped monitor and control erosion of the creek. I have also served on the audit, legal, personnel, special events and insurance committees, and, as an ad hoc member, on the Long Range Planning and the Town Hall Renovation Committees.

I have represented the Town and/or testified at County hearings on Master and Sector Plans, zoning issues, the Friendship Heights development, and at Maryland Municipal League meetings dealing with county and legislative issues.

I have the time, experience and desire to be an active member of the Town Council and to continue to work for the well being of the Town and the preservation of its historic ambiance. If reelected I will continue to work for traffic control and reasonable development in the area. I want to take an active role in any decisions to be made for the future of the town hall, and the swimming pool and surrounding areas. I will keep an open mind on these and other projects and represent the needs of the Town and its residents.

It has been an honor to serve. I will appreciate your support.

Jack Gerber

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and my candidacy for a seat on the Somerset Town Council in the upcoming election. I moved to Somerset with my wife, Lyndsey, and three children (Amanda – 13; Bradford – 11; and Clayton – 8) about two years ago because of the strong sense of community that defines Somerset.

The Challenges We Face

I share with many of you significant concerns over how the current Council has approached finding and implementing solutions to Town issues. We have no strategy – no coordinated Master Plan to guide the direction of the Town. Each decision (small and large) is made tactically and in a vacuum, without consideration for how issues are intertwined.

With regard to the Town Hall renovation, I do not believe that spending \$1.8 million is in the best interest of Town residents. That is not to say that we should abandon Town Hall. It is a significant part of our history. We must challenge ourselves to find creative solutions for meeting our diverse needs and interests.

I will push Town management with regard to its approach to solving problems, its understanding of the needs of the community, and the means by which those needs are met.

I am asking for your support and the opportunity to work with you in helping to shape the direction of the Town for many years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Richard J. Kessler

A resident on Cumberland Avenue since 1991 with three sons all graduates of Somerset School, all on the swim team: the two oldest, TK and Nick, are coaches. My wife, Pamela Cox, is a swim team referee and I am a lowly timer. I was a Pack 52 Cub Scout leader and now a merit badge counselor to Boy Scout Troop 52.

I represented the Town on the Somerset School modernization plan, the Pool Committee and the Coordinating Council for Friendship Heights, including the Friendship Heights Sector Development plans where I pushed for the inclusion of a baseball field when the Geico property is developed and for a County administered Community Center with a basketball court at the Hecht Company site. I promoted the development of playground in Somerset and supported the batting cage, pool picnic area, and water slide.

I advocate expanded community amenities, street safety, and maintaining our trees and environment. I support an expanded community facility at the pool, possibly including a year-around lap lane. I oppose investing in a massive new Town Hall but would support office and storage renovation. Friendship Heights and Westbard development traffic increases, mansionization, and community recreation facilities will be new issues.

A Colgate University graduate with a Ph.D. from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, I served with the U.S. Army in Vietnam and was awarded a Bronze Star and Army Commendation Medal. I am the Democratic Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Mayor's Den

By Walter J. Behr

5-Year Plan: First Step in Budget Process

On March 7, I presented my Five-Year Plan to the Town Council. Eight days later, a major item in the plan became obsolete. I refer to the line item of \$1,800,000 for next year to improve the Town Hall. (The figure of \$1,807,000 in the summary of the plan on the opposite page includes \$7,000 for Town garage operating expenses.)

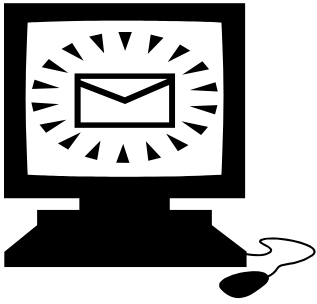
It became obvious from the discussion at the March 15 special meeting that residents are not yet ready for the Council to make a decision of this magnitude.

The fiscal plan is the first step in our annual budget and property tax process. A hearing and discussion of the plan occurred at the March Council meeting, but, in accordance with the Town Code, the Council did not act on the plan. A hearing on my proposed budget and tax rate for next year (Fiscal Year 2006, which runs from July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006) will take place at the May 2 Council meeting, and that body will act on both at the June 6 session.

Combined Summary of General and Capital Projects Funds

| REVENUE | FY04 AUDIT | FY05 ESTIMATE | FY06 BUDGET | FY07 PROJ. | FY08 PROJ. | FY09 PROJ. | FY10 PROJ. |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Property Tax | 122,135 | 129,531 | 145,143 | 160,411 | 178,556 | 196,645 | 214,433 |
| State Income Tax | 477,881 | 511,000 | 536,550 | 563,378 | 591,546 | 621,124 | 652,180 |
| Other | 150,194 | 151,732 | 343,151 | 155,702 | 166,596 | 168,010 | 169,445 |
| Total Revenue | 750,210 | 792,263 | 1,024,844 | 879,491 | 936,698 | 985,779 | 1,036,058 |
| EXPENSES | | | | | | | |
| Personnel | 200,487 | 200,764 | 215,863 | 222,849 | 230,163 | 237,825 | 245,859 |
| Legal | 17,236 | 25,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| Other General | 85,142 | 89,655 | 89,069 | 93,748 | 78,266 | 80,456 | 82,742 |
| Streets/Sidewalks | 72,260 | 68,000 | 85,300 | 66,629 | 68,019 | 664,472 | 70,993 |
| Trees/Grnds/Parks | 86,378 | 83,000 | 67,360 | 82,731 | 78,113 | 68,506 | 68,911 |
| Sanitation/Leaves | 94,909 | 97,726 | 102,900 | 103,110 | 104,026 | 106,399 | 106,629 |
| Swimming Pool | 131,902 | 145,000 | 148,600 | 252,308 | 156,127 | 160,061 | 164,113 |
| Tennis Courts | 1,584 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 16,500 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Batting Cage | 816 | 1,530 | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 |
| Town Hall/Garage | 18,889 | 38,817 | 1,807,000 | 12,000 | 12,300 | 12,609 | 12,927 |
| Major Equipment | 1,210 | 40,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Erosion Control | 0 | 0 | 100,000 | 50,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Misc./Engineer | 2,098 | 3,500 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Undergrounding | 0 | 20,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Contingency | 0 | 0 | 70,000 | 70,000 | 70,000 | 70,000 | 70,000 |
| Total Expenses | 712,911 | 813,992 | 2,714,592 | 997,375 | 825,514 | 1,428,828 | 850,674 |
| DEBT SERVICE FUND | | | | | | | |
| Revenue | 0 | 0 | 1,000,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Payments | 0 | 0 | 75,000 | 75,000 | 75,000 | 75,000 | 75,000 |
| Transfer from CPF | 0 | 0 | -75,000 | -75,000 | -75,000 | -75,000 | -75,000 |
| COMBINED FUND BALANCE END OF YEAR | | | | | | | |
| Beginning of Year | 1,567,593 | 1,1604,892 | 1,583,163 | 818,415 | 625,531 | 661,715 | 143,666 |
| Excess of Revenue Over/(Under) | 37,229 | -21,729 | -764,748 | -192,884 | 36,184 | -518,049 | 110,384 |
| End of Year | 1,604,892 | 1,583,163 | 818,415 | 625,531 | 661,715 | 143,666 | 254,050 |

Highlights on Town Web Site



Highlights of the Five-Year Plan and the complete plan are on the Town Web site, and copies are available at the Town Hall. Following are a few of the highlights.

Property Tax remains five cents for each \$100 of assessed value of house and lot. Higher assessed values – a maximum effective increase of 10 percent a year – will result in higher revenue each year.

State Income Tax is by far our largest source of income, actually about two-thirds of the total. The Comptroller sends us a portion of Maryland income tax paid by residents. Estimates are from the State, and I believe they are conservative for two reasons. First, in most years, revenues have exceeded estimates from the Comptroller. Second, the demographics of Somerset are changing, with younger, two-income families gradually replacing one-income and retiree families and individuals.

Personnel includes salaries, pensions, health and dental insurance and, of course, salaries. I am proposing a 10 percent increase next year for Enrique Cabrera, leader of our maintenance staff, and five percent for all other employees. A three percent a year boost in salaries is shown for Fiscal Years 07 through 10.

Streets/Sidewalks. In 06, \$25,000 is for repairing sidewalks and curbs. (Curbs and sidewalks damaged by school construction trucks will be repaired by the school contractor.) \$600,000 in 09 is for repaving all Town streets.

Swimming Pool. \$100,000 in 07 is planned for extending the bathhouse.

Town Hall/Garage includes \$25,000 this year (05) for the Town Hall architect, Greg Wiedemann. As mentioned above, the Town Hall renovation figure of \$1.8 million will be modified in the draft budget for next year.

Major Equipment. \$40,000 in 05 is for replacing our 1992 1-ton truck.

Erosion Control. \$100,000 in 06 and \$50,000 in 07 is planned for further efforts to slow erosion of Little Falls Branch.

Undergrounding. This year we are spending \$20,000 for an engineer's study and estimates of costs. I regret that I cannot recommend spending for even a pilot project in the next five years.

DEBT SERVICE FUND. A \$1 million loan plus a portion of our existing surplus would pay for capital improvements of up to \$2 million. Annual interest and principal payments of \$75,000 a year for 20 years would repay the loan.

COMBINED FUND BALANCE – END OF YEAR. While the estimated fund balances, or reserves, in the next five years are substantially lower than at present, I feel that they are quite adequate in view of conservative estimates of our largest source of income, namely, State income tax rebates.

Vacancy on Swimming Pool Committee

Joel Brinkley, the newest member of the Swimming Pool Committee, has regretfully resigned because his frequent travels as a *New York Times* writer make it impossible for him to attend most committee meetings.

If you are interested in being considered for the vacancy, please submit a brief statement of your qualifications by Tuesday, April 5 (e-mail mayor@townofsomerset.com). Council confirmation of my appointee is scheduled for the April 11 Town Council meeting.

Clyde's to Reopen on Schedule

Despite a story that has been circulating in recent weeks, Clyde's restaurant in the Chevy Chase Center will reopen on schedule this summer, according to Michele Horwitz Cornwell, Senior Vice President of the Chevy Chase Land Company. Outdoor seating will not be available until about a year later.

After Clyde's, the next part of the development to open will be *The Collection*, which is the name of the luxury retail stores that will occupy the two- and three-story buildings on Wisconsin Avenue. The Collection is scheduled to open in a year or so.

At about the same time, the neighborhood retail center will open with a tenant not previously announced, Gifford's Ice Cream. The anchor of the center will be a Giant Food and Pharmacy that will be more than double the size of the old Giant. Others in the center will be Chevy Chase and Eagle Banks, Galaxy Dry Cleaners and Potomac Pizza.

For further details on plans and schedule for the massive redevelopment, visit www.cclandco.com

Check Out New Street Lights

Don't forget to check out the new street lights on Trent Street between Falstone Avenue and 5512 Trent. High-pressure sodium (HPS) lights have replaced mercury vapor lights for a six-month trial period. The plan is for the Council to decide, after the trial period, whether to leave them in place, remove them and reinstall mercury vapor or replace the mercury lights throughout the Town with HPS.

Thanks to Howard Byron, with the assistance of Len Harris and Derek Coen, for patiently gathering information and making the necessary arrangements with Pepco and the contractor that installed the new lights.

No Electrical Aggregation

For the fifth year in succession, the effort of the Maryland Municipal League and others to have the General Assembly pass an electrical aggregation bill failed – this time by a single vote in the Senate Finance Committee. The bill would have permitted municipalities to join together to bargain for lower electric power rates for their residents. Those residents who so desired would have had the authority to opt out of the arrangement.

Somerset was one of eight Montgomery County towns and cities, along with 26 municipalities in Prince Georges County that urged the General Assembly to pass the bill.

Take Pride in Our High School

You may have read recently of the excellent Advanced Placement (AP) results of Montgomery County high school students. The passing rate of 39.4 percent of all County public school students on the AP exams was triple the national average. The County's passing rate for African-American students at 14.6 percent was greater than the national passing rate of 13 percent for all students combined.

At our neighborhood high school, Bethesda-Chevy Chase, 53.6 percent of all students in last year's senior class took at least one AP course and earned a passing score on the exam. That passing rate is four times the national average without even including the students in B-CC's equally rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) Program.

For the 2005-06 school year, B-CC will offer new courses in AP Economics, AP Comparative Government, AP Studio Art, AP Environmental Science and an Information Technology course for IB students.

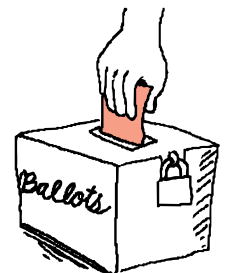
Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

TOWN ELECTION APRIL 7

Election Day for the Town of Somerset is Thursday, April 7, for three Council members. Nominations were received for Tom Eldridge, Judy Frankel, Jack Gerber and Richard Kessler for Council member. Voting will take place at the Town Hall on Thursday, April 7, from 5:00-9:00 p.m.

Absentee ballots are available in the Town Hall. Qualified voters who will be absent from Town on election day, or who are incapacitated, may obtain absentee ballots from the Clerk-Treasurer by writing him at 4510 Cumberland Avenue or by calling 301-657-3211. Ballots will be counted if returned to the Clerk-Treasurer or the Board of Supervisors of Elections before 9 p.m. on Election Day, April 7.



FINAL REMINDER on STATE TAX RETURNS

Somerset's largest source of revenue is its share of the State income tax paid by Town residents. But Somerset will not get its share of income taxes unless its name appears on the Maryland income tax form in the box marked, "City, town or taxing area." Please make sure you fill out this box and the "Maryland County" box correctly so that both jurisdictions receive the proper payments from the State.

2005 TENNIS ID CARDS

Tennis ID cards for 2005 are available from Tom at the Town Hall office. Fees are still only \$5 per family for the annual card. Please make your checks out to "Town of Somerset."

BATTING CAGE ANNUAL FEES

Batting cage users are reminded that their annual fees of \$5 are due for continued use of the equipment.

SPRING CLEANUP

After a long, hard winter, cleanup has begun in Town. Please remember the following:

Do not put your yard waste in plastic bags; use paper bags or marked trash cans. Place your cans or paper bags on the curb, **not in the street**.

Do not dump your yard waste at the Swimming Pool parking lot or at the end of Warwick Place. Please remind your yard workers of this, too.



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.

SOMERSET QUIET HOURS

As the weather improves, don't forget Town noise limitations between the hours of 9 pm and 9 am daily. This applies to noise from sources associated with residential living, such as blowers, power mowers and chain saws.

The same hours apply to construction on weekends and holidays; that is, it may occur only between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. On weekdays, it is legal to start at 7 a.m.

MVA MOBILE OFFICE

The MVA's mobile office will be in Friendship Heights on April 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

PERMITS GRANTED

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

Curb: Cathy and David Pickar, 4915 Dorset Avenue, to widen their apron.

Legislation

At the March 7 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Introduced legislation to amend 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.
2. Introduced legislation to amend the Town Charter and Code to increase fines for removal of trees without a permit from \$400 to \$1,000.

Council Activity

At the March 7 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Heard a report from Caroline Cooper on the progress of the Town Hall Renovation Committee. The committee had mailed an announcement of the March 15 public meeting to residents with a question and answer document last week.
2. Confirmed the Mayor's reappointment of Alan Dock, Bonnie Lewin, Barbara Marblestone and Sarah Morse for two-year terms on the Special Events Committee.
3. Confirmed the Mayor's reappointment of Richard Furcolo and Chris Lane for two-year terms on the Batting Cage Committee and reappointment of Richard Furcolo as chair for another year.
4. Heard the presentation of the proposed landscaping plan for the Greystone Street/River Road entrance by the Parks and Natural Resources Committee.
5. Received nominations from the floor for Tom Eldridge, Judy Frankel, Jack Gerber and Richard Kessler for Council members. Set March 28 as the date for the candidates' forum.
6. Recommended approval to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and approved a Town building permit, a tree removal permit for one tree, to be replaced by a 2-inch caliper tree, and a curb cut permit, for Bonnie Thomson and Eugene Tillman, 5808 Warwick Place, to add a two-story addition to the rear of their house, subject to receipt of 1) a County permit, 2) Town building permit fee, 3) a tree deposit of \$200, 4) a curb cut fee of \$10 for a curb cut of no more than 16 feet and 5) names and Maryland license numbers for the building and tree removal contractors.
7. Approved a building permit for Dana and Jeffrey Macher, 4725 Cumberland Avenue, to extend the width of their deck by five feet, subject to receipt of the Town permit fee.
8. Heard a report from Josh Bobeck on the progress of Pool House Survey Committee and reviewed the latest version of the survey to be sent to Town residents. Voted 2-3 against expenditure to have Ann Bisconti Dyke's company do the survey because there was no previous public notice of the amount. (Vote: Eldridge and Slavin for; Frankel, Kessler and Simmons opposed.) Action on this item will be taken at the April meeting.
9. Approved a contract with Aloha, Inc. to replace the current pool heater with two smaller heaters for \$5,500.
10. Heard the Mayor's presentation of his Five-Year Fiscal Plan.
11. Approved a three-year contract extension with J&J Inc. for refuse and recycling service beginning in April for \$94,800 a year with a two percent cost-of-living increase each year.
12. Discussed hiring police to enforce speed limit and STOP signs in Town. Action will be taken at the April meeting.
13. Discussed adding more and/or raising the height of the Town speed humps, but determined not to pursue this based on advice from three traffic experts.
14. Proclaimed April 1 as 2005 Arbor Day for the Town.



15. Authorized a contribution of an additional \$7,500 for renovation of Norwood Park playgrounds (Vote: Eldridge, Kessler and Slavin for; Frankel and Simmons opposed. Motion passed 3-2.)

16. Took no action on revocation of a 1978 resolution concerning driveways at 5403 Trent Street and 5001 River Road until the Town Attorney reviews the case.

Proposal to Hire Police Moves Forward

by Council member Tom Eldridge

At the March meeting, the Town Council discussed my proposed pilot project to hire Village of Chevy Chase Police to enforce speeding and stops sign regulations in Town. Based on comments from residents and other Council members at that meeting, I have modified the proposal to shorten its duration, increase the number of hours the officers will patrol the Town each week, and make data collection a specific part of the proposal. The matter will be discussed again at the April meeting, and a final vote on the proposal could take place in May. Here is the proposal:

The Town shall, on a four month pilot basis, secure the services of the Village of Chevy Chase Police Department to perform routine patrol and to enforce speeding and stop sign regulations in Town. The Town shall seek to retain the Village Police for a minimum of eight hours per week during the four month pilot project for a sum not to exceed \$5,200. The Town shall ensure that, as part of their services, the Village Police collect such data that the Town believes will be most useful in helping it to evaluate the pilot project. A Committee consisting of the Mayor and two Council members voting in favor of this proposal (and chosen by the Council) shall be responsible for negotiating with appropriate officials of the Village of Chevy Chase and making decisions regarding the start and end dates of this project; determining how to educate Town residents about the project; and deciding upon the schedule of police activity, the level of enforcement, the data to be collected, and the reporting requirements. The Committee shall report its results to the Council after the conclusion of the pilot project.

Increased enforcement, the focus of this proposal, is of course not the only action the Town can take to solve our traffic problems. The Council also is considering suggestions from residents including improving signage and adding more traffic calming devices. These and other ideas can play a role in a comprehensive approach to solving our traffic problems. I continue to believe, however, that it is important to study the effects of greater enforcement in formulating that approach.

A New Look for the Greystone Entrance

by Corrie Morsey, Chair Parks & Natural Resources Committee (PNRC)

Members of the PNRC are very excited about the new landscape plan crafted by Melissa Gildea of Jordan Honeyman Landscape Architecture for the Greystone entrance. The plan was presented to the Mayor and Council members at their March meeting.

The design replicates many of the plant materials used at the Dorset Avenue entrance. However, the similarity ends there as the plan seeks to balance both sides of Greystone, while complimenting the 1950's brickwork and incorporate many existing and new shrubs and perennials. We believe the result is a welcoming entrance into Town from the southwest.

The plan is low-maintenance, which should eliminate the need for continual and costly planting of annuals. For example, more than \$900 was spent to purchase pansies for the Greystone entrance last fall.

While the deadline for bids is not until early April, we anticipate requesting some \$11,000 to fund the project. This amount is to cover implementing the plan and retaining Jordan Honeyman Landscape Architecture to oversee the entire project. The hourly rate for the latter is \$95 an hour. Jordan Honeyman will only bill us for hours worked. As soon as we have a firmer handle on the cost, we will post it on the Town website. Meanwhile, come by and take a look the plan, which can be seen in the Town Hall during normal office hours.

Pool House Survey Coming Soon

by Josh Bobeck, Chair, Pool Survey Committee

In 2004, the Town Council created a Pool House Survey Committee to survey residents 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. After months of deliberation and consultation with an expert on public opinion surveys, the Committee is ready to release the survey.

We expect the survey to be available in late April, and ask that respondents return them within two weeks of distribution. Each household will receive two surveys, on the assumption that two adult members of the house are the owners or renters of the property. The Committee has asked the Town Council to retain Ann Bisconti to distribute the survey, and collect and tabulate responses, at a cost of approximately \$4,643. The Committee will then provide a report to the Town at which time the Committee will cease to exist.

The Committee has striven to develop a balanced survey without promoting a particular viewpoint on Town capital expenditures, while still providing Town residents and the Town Council with meaningful data. Please make a note to respond to the survey on time. The Committee looks forward to your participation.

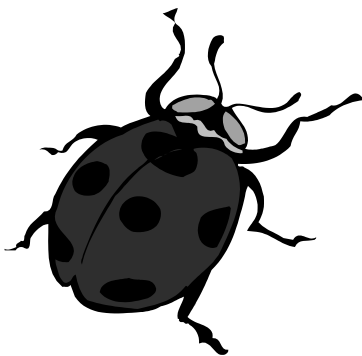
Attention All Swim Team Parents: Save the date

by Sarah Morse

Saturday April 30 from 9:00-10:00 a.m. is the date for this year's *Annual Really Fun Parents Meeting* to be held at 4920 Dorset Ave. Doughnuts and coffee will be available for the first fifty parents to arrive. Jobs, social events and other important organization issues will be on the agenda. Call (301) 907-3298 or email Sarah Morse at momomorse@hotmail.com if you have questions about the meeting or want to add items to the agenda.

Project Ladybug: Watch Where You Step

by Faith and Chip Breen



Lawn herbicides are easily tracked into your home. One recent study found that indoor residues of toxics like 2,4-D (a primary ingredient in many herbicides) can expose children to levels 10 times higher than pre-application levels (Town of Chevy Chase Project Ladybug newsletter).

Spring is a time when you may wish to fertilize your lawn so we hope you will consider using a neighbor and pet friendly fertilizer. For additional information on pesticides go to the Maryland Health and Mental Hygiene Department at:

<http://www.cha.state.md.us/oeh/html/pesticide.html>

- Did you know that the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Office of Environmental Health Coordination has an online form titled: Maryland Resident Human Illness Related To Pesticide Exposure Report Form? It can be completed online at <https://www.cha.state.md.us/oeh/html/hcp/hcp.cfm>
- Eat more asparagus -- a recent article in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* reported researchers at the University of California at Davis found that a water extract of fresh asparagus completely degraded the pesticide malathion over four hours. The next best vegetable was carrots.
- Finally, if you are looking for a great source of inspiration, you may wish to take a spring walk through Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton, (301) 962-1400, www.brooksidegardens.org.

Spring Has Sprung!

by Sarah Morse

Please join town residents for our soon to be annual spring brunch on Sunday, April 10 from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. Residents are asked to bring a dish to share, to wear their best spring hat, and be ready to hunt for eggs. Questions and volunteers to help, call Sarah Morse at (301) 907-3298 or e-mail morsekathan@earthlink.net or Alan Dock (240) 497-1848, e-mail alandock@hotmail.com.

Meet the Town Staff -- Enrique Cabrera

by Council member Lesley Simmons



Enrique Cabrera, presently acting as foreman of two other maintenance staff who together work hard to keep our Town's public areas spick and span, has worked for Somerset for four years.

Enrique's day starts early, at 7:00 a.m., when he cleans the Town Hall and readies it for any events on the calendar for the day. He may also clean the tennis courts, undertake routine maintenance on the Town equipment, or perform other chores around the Town Hall complex before setting out for the daily drive around our streets to check that everything is OK. Town maintenance staff drive every street every day. If they find a problem, they most often correct it themselves; if they can't, they report back to the Town Hall.

After that there are many daily tasks that differ with the seasons: in winter the Town Hall and swimming pool paths and driveway must be cleared of snow. In summer there is grass to be cut and plantings to be watered. In fall there

are leaves to collect.

Enrique is originally from Puerto Plata, a picturesque resort city situated at the base of the towering Mt. Isabel de Torres on the north coast of the Dominican Republic, which he says is very beautiful. He recommends visiting if you are in the area.

Before coming to Somerset, Enrique did night work for a bus company. His cousin, Felix, whom some residents may remember, worked for the Town and recommended Enrique when a vacancy on the maintenance team came up. He likes his job.

Enrique says he doesn't speak too much to Somerset residents, explaining that his English isn't good and some people aren't comfortable talking to him because they don't understand him well. But he says, "people in Somerset are nice" and he adds enthusiastically, "I'm doing, right now, a job that I like!"

On My Mind

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

During the past month there has been a great deal of discussion, including by e-mail, about the future of our Town Hall, especially in the context of Somerset's funding priorities. While residents seem to agree that at a minimum something must be done to address the condition of the structure and the administrative needs of the Town, there appears to be a reluctance to make any concrete recommendations yet.

Meanwhile we are waiting for the results of the extensive survey that residents will be receiving to gauge public opinion on the desires for the pool site. I am mindful, too that some residents have voiced other priorities for spending such as undergrounding, street lights, traffic controls or road repairs.

It will be up to the Council to put the pieces of this puzzle together yet, as some have pointed out, it will be difficult to make individual decisions in a vacuum, and it will be necessary to have an overall plan.

I was recently thinking about better ways to gather residents' views while augmenting the ability of Council members to make decisions based on as much information as possible. In that context, I re-read portions of the oft-quoted Final Report of the Long Range Planning Committee, dated 2002, and was reminded that there had been a proposal to deal with this problem: the creation of a town budget committee. The purposes of the committee would include:

- formalizing the Council's input into the Mayor's five year plan by looking at projected income and expenses and making specific recommendations based on cost and community desires,
- reviewing the town's overall budgets,
- holding public meetings as required, and
- overseeing the current budget on a regular basis.

The Budget Subcommittee of the Long Range Planning Committee, which I chaired, suggested this new committee would be made up of some Council members and some members of the public. (The Council is made up of five hard working members who have to deal with a multitude of issues in a short period of time and can't always develop the expertise in one particular area on their own.) I plan to introduce an amendment to the Town Code at the April meeting to establish this new Committee. In the interim, I would appreciate hearing from everyone interested in this concept and especially those with particular expertise. This is a work in formation and I am open, and indeed would welcome new ideas. As always, you can reach me at (301) 654-6767 or by e-mail at jzslavin@aol.com

County News

County Executive Douglas M. Duncan seeks applicants to fill the following Boards, Committees and Commissions:

- Commission on Youth and Children (adult and youth applicants)
- Water Quality Advisory Group
- Board of Directors of Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, Inc
- Strathmore Hall Foundation Board of Directors
- Energy and Air Quality Advisory Committee
- Interagency Coordinating Board
- Board of Social Services

Details, deadlines and application information can be found on the County website at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/news/press/pressrel.cfm>

Montgomery County Public Libraries hold numerous activities for toddlers – including regular story and rhyme programs. For information visit the Chevy Chase Library at 8005 Connecticut Avenue, call (301) 986-4313 TTY (301) 657-0830 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library

All About People

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

We are proud of our own Council member **TOM ELDRIDGE** (Warwick), a former member of the staff of the esteemed 9-11 Commission, who wrote a good part of the report *9-11 and Terrorist Travel*, which was the subject of a Senate hearing this month. The report is still available from Amazon.com, five star rating and all. Tom is now happily serving as Senior Counsel of the Homeland Security Committee in the Senate...Another of Somerset's leading citizens, former Council member **NAT FINKELSTEIN** (Surrey) has been reappointed to the County Cable Advisory Commission for a second term...**LUCY and HARRY FREEMAN** are thrilled to announce the birth of second grandchild **JEM WILSON**, son of **RACHEL** and **BRUCE** on March 6 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Jem came into this world at 6lbs, 2 oz. and Lucy reports that she saw a picture soon after the water birth, and that he has curly hair and looks content and round. At press time, Lucy was traveling to J'burg to hold and rock him...**MARNIE SHAUL** (Uppingham), who does a great job as one of the Town's reps to the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights, gets additional kudos as a recent recipient of a distinguished service award for exceptional leadership from the Government Accountability Office...Take note--what began as a hobby has become a full time occupation for **ALEX DUNN** (Warwick), who has just completed his 71st trip as a gentleman host and guest lecturer aboard cruise ships. Since his first trans-Atlantic voyage on a freighter from Newport News, Virginia to Rotterdam, he has sailed on all the major cruise lines and now works as an agent for Didion World Cruises in Alexandria...Belated congratulations to **GARDINER and ELIZABETH HARRIS** (Cumberland) on the birth of **BRAM TYLER HARRIS**, their second child, last September. Bram was 10 lbs, 2 oz. with "nearly black hair standing nearly straight up from his head"...Early congratulations to **HOWARD SIMKOWITZ** and **KATHERINE LACY** (Cumberland) who tell me daughter **LACY SIMKOWITZ** will be graduating from Bard College in May with a degree in Art History. Next month I will hopefully report on what Lacy's future plans are...There is a new addition to the household of **REBECCA ARBOGAST** and **BARRY EKDOM** (Cumberland). Rebecca reports that after five years of "persuasive essays" her children **NOAH and CLAIRE** have finally "worn her down" and the family is now the proud owner of **ANDY**, a mixed breed puppy named after the children's favorite Somerset School teacher, Mrs. Anderson. Andy likes to visit **LILY and BLUE**, two dogs owned by **ED and LYNN DOLNICK** (Cumberland) across the street that are "about one thousand times bigger than Andy," and waking her family up in the middle of the night to go out...**KEN TOLO** (Uppingham) has exciting and historic news. He has been appointed the first William J. Clinton Distinguished Professor at the new University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service in Little Rock. He and wife **PATTY ELDER** will continue to live in town with Ken traveling to the Clinton School a couple of times a month...I urge all Somerset residents, and especially the wine lovers, to watch *Wine, Food & Friends with Karen MacNeil* on PBS. Check the local listings for show times. This lively series debuted late last year and was created as an antidote to "wine anxiety." The host has been described as the "Julia Child of wine" and the series has been described as "non-threatening" and a "long way from most people's image of learning about wine." The show's executive producer is **SCOTT PURITZ** (Essex)...Israel's Ambassador to the United States, the Honorable Daniel Ayalon, has presented author **MAURY ATKIN** (Uppingham) with a distinguished award to recognize his dedicated service to the State of Israel from its founding to present. Maury received this honor at a luncheon this month sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Collier County, Florida. He will be back in town shortly to continue to promote his new book...And don't forget to get in touch with me by e-mail or letter, especially with news of all those upcoming graduations.

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

CLERK-TREASURER

Tom Carter

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

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, April 18, Copy April 19

Classifieds

SERVICES

PIANO & FLUTE lessons (with THEORY) Wash. Post music critic. CBS RECORDINGS writer. FACULTY: G.W.U., MARYLAND U., SIDWELL. Music Degrees: A.B. Harvard; M.A. Columbia; Ph.D. Maryland. Studied: PEABODY CONSERVATORY & BERLIN (GERMANY). 30 years teaching all ages, levels. Call Cecelia Porter, 301-654-2165.

HOME REPAIR CONTRACTOR. We have been very pleased with contractor - carpentry, dry wall, cabinet repair, painting, roof repair. Call us for a reference. Howard Simkowitz or Katherine Lacy, 301-656-5637.

MISCELLANEOUS

I NEED A HOUSE June 20-26 and a second house June 23-26 in which my visiting family can stay. We will cook and eat at my house on Falstone. If you are vacationing those dates and are interested, please call Sara Anderson, 301-986-7926.

SERVICES

ACADEMIC TUTOR. M.A. in Biology and Special Ed. Fifteen- years experience in remediation, enrichment and work with learning disabled. Math through Algebra; study and organizational skills; French; test preparation: SSAT, PSAT, SAT. Call Sheryl Gilbert, 301-656-1753.

HEBREW TUTOR (native speaker) with more than 20 years experience teaching reading and conversation to children, bar/bat mitzvah and adults. Excellent references. Will teach at your house or mine. Call Varda Daniels at 301-986-4836.

MY EXCELLENT BABYSITTER is looking for FT or PT summer work in the area. Mature, English-speaking woman. Excellent driver. Good references. Very dependable and kind. Call Katherine at 301-656-0006 or Marisol at 240-601-6212.

FOR SALE

MOVING FROM SOMERSET and looking to sell: Henredon armoire and dresser, ping pong table, large freezer, microwave, inlaid chest, butcher block table surface, German pendulum wall clock, queen bed, gardening and house tools, fireproof 4-drawer cabinet, round mahogany table, bookcases, many other things. Call Suzanne Singer, 301-986-1549.

MISCELLANEOUS

FREE TO GOOD HOME: 2 male cockatiels, 4 years old, hand-tamed, wonderful pets for kids or adults. Bird cage, playground and all accessories (food, book, etc.) included. Call Joe or Lorrie Barse at 301-654-1626.

Ads are printed as a courtesy to Town residents. The Town makes no representations as to quality, safety or otherwise regarding the goods and services advertised. Readers should make their own inquiries. TO PLACE AN AD, submit typed or neatly printed copy to the Clerk-Treasurer. \$1 for 25 words or less; \$2 for 26-50 words. Check or exact change. MUST INCLUDE A SOMERSET PHONE NUMBER.

PELIMINARY AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL

MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2005 - 7:30 P.M.

1. Administration of oath of office to three Council members – 7:30.
2. Approval of minutes of the March 7 regular meeting and the March 20 Special Meeting – 7:35.
3. Discussion of financial report – 7:40.
4. Transfer of \$1,000 from General Fund Contingency to General Fund Miscellaneous/Engineer for traffic speed surveys – 7:45.
5. Election of Vice President of Council for one-year term – 7:50.
6. Agreement on special responsibilities of Council members – 7:55.
7. Action on setting spring large item pickup by trash hauler on Friday, May 13 – 8:00.
8. Action on date of September Council meeting (suggested: Tuesday, September 6) – 8:05.
9. Report by Caroline Cooper, chair, Town Hall Renovation Committee, and discussion of future of the committee – 8:10.
10. Report by Josh Bobeck on progress of Pool House Survey Committee and action on request to hire Ann Bisconti Dyke to distribute and compile resident survey at a cost of approximately \$4,660 – 8:30.
- *11. Action on contract to landscape Greystone entrance for up to \$11,000 – 8:40.
12. Fact finding hearing and action on Town building permit application by Matt Morley and Joy Abel, 4801 Grantham Avenue, to enclose their front porch and add to their foyer – 8:45.
13. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Patrick Keating to move a 4-to-5-inch maple tree to a different location in the back yard of 4904 Essex Avenue – 8:50.
14. Mayor's report – 9:00.
15. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 9:10.
16. Report by Howard Byron on meeting with County Council member Howard Denis in effort to retain Metro drop-off lane in front of Hecht's – 9:20.
17. Suggestions and questions from residents – 9:25.
- *18. Discussion of hiring police to enforce speed limit and STOP signs in Town – 9:35.
19. Action on Town position reference Zoning Text Amendment 03-27, modifying rules on height of houses in the R-60 Zone (as in Somerset) – 9:55.
20. Action on amendments to Town Code Section 6-308(b), Decisions on Building Permit Applications, and Section 8-208(c), Appeal of [Tree] Permit Decisions, extending deadline for written Council decisions to 40 days from date of hearing – 10:05.
21. Action on Town Charter and Code amendments to increase fines for removal of trees without a permit from \$400 to \$1,000 – 10:10.
22. Action on contract to have streets swept for no more than \$2,150 – 10:15.
23. Action on extension of contract with Connecting Links for managing Town Web site under which the site would continue to be updated monthly, but would be thoroughly reviewed annually, for the monthly fee of \$325 – 10:20.
- *24. Confirmation of Mayor's appointment to Swimming Pool Committee to replace Joel Brinkley, who has resigned – 10:25.
- *25. Introduction of Town Code amendment to establish a Budget Committee – 10:30.
28. Action revoking 1978 resolution concerning driveways at 5403 Trent Street and 5001 River Road since the property owners have reached an amicable resolution of the issue – 10:40.
28. New business – 10:50.
28. Adjournment – 10:55.

Items marked * have an accompanying article in this issue of the Town Journal.