



# SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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## 1906 – 2006 Celebrating One Hundred Years A Town

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## Mayor's Den

By Walter Behr

### **Town Journal Via E-Mail**

The *Town Journal* is now available by e-mail (as a PDF attachment) as well as by regular mail and by logging onto the Town Web site. Please notify Tom Carter at the Town Hall if you desire this service. Please indicate whether you want to stop or continue receiving the paper version of the newsletter by regular mail.

### **How Dependable Is Our Electric Service?**

After the electric power failures in Somerset on January 14 and 15, several residents reported that lights were on in nearby areas when ours were out, and they wondered why service in Somerset was less dependable than in surrounding communities. I asked Pepco for the facts.

Their conclusion - based on outages from October 2004 through September 2005 - is that

neighborhoods north of us (Drummond and Chevy Chase West) and east of us (Chevy Chase Village) were neither no better off nor worse off than Somerset. However, there have, indeed, been fewer outages west of us (Kenwood) than in our Town during the year ending last September.

Pepco studies dependability in terms of quartiles. Areas with the fewest outages are in Quartile 1; those with the most outages are in Quartile 4. Somerset, Chevy Chase North and Chevy Chase Village are in the third (next-to-worst) quartile. Kenwood is in the second (next-to-best) quartile.

***One hundred years ago the tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower. There were only 8,000 cars and only 144 miles of paved roads in the United States. In Somerset one hundred years ago there were no paved roads!***

The utility's efforts to improve dependability are concentrated in the two percent of its service area with the worst records. In these worst-case neighborhoods, they are trimming trees to reduce the chance of branches falling on the lines and replacing some equipment.

Two feeders (neighborhood power lines) deliver electricity to Somerset. Altogether, Pepco has 668 feeders in its Maryland service territory.

## Lots of Fire Engines in Town



The parade of fire engines on the dead-end block of Essex Avenue the morning of February 16 was not occasioned by a fire, but by a broken gas main. Callahan employees severed the two-inch gas line while digging down to the sewer at 4825 Essex.

The accident could have been the result of inaccurate markings by Miss Utility, or it could have been caused by imprecise excavating by the contractor. Whether or not Callahan pays Washington Gas for the cost of stopping the leak is up to those two parties to figure out.

On a recent Saturday night, fire engines concentrated at Greystone and River Road and quickly extinguished a fire on the utility pole that accommodates equipment for the lights at our southerly entrance. What caused the fire remains a mystery, but the Town electrician made the necessary repairs, Pepco turned on the juice and our attractive portal is once again visible at night.

## School Field to Open in May

Somerset School's playing field will be open for students for about a month before school vacation, but will be closed during the summer to give the new turf a better chance of thriving over the years, according to James Song, Director of the Construction Division of Montgomery County Public Schools.

All work on the school specified in the \$12 million contract will be completed but not by Pantech, the general contractor. Pantech voluntarily defaulted on the project last month, allowing the bonding company to take over and avoiding legal entanglements that could have led to further delay in finishing the job.

Work on the field will begin on March 15 or, possibly, sooner if there is no further threat of freezing. Three weeks without rain are needed to grade and treat the soil and lay the sod. Four more weeks are required for the roots to stabilize before the field can be used. The bottom line is that with ideal weather, but only with ideal weather, school children could start playing on the grass in early to mid-May.

## Somerset West End Improvements

Have you noticed the refurbished "TOWN OF SOMERSET - INCORPORATED 1906" rustic-looking sign in Little Falls Park at the western Dorset Avenue entrance to our Town? Thanks to the Parks Department for their willing response to our request that the old sign either be redone or replaced. The request emanated from our Parks and Natural Resources Committee.

A less visible, but important improvement has just been completed nearby, at the foot of Cumberland Avenue. Montgomery County has installed a storm drain inlet to eliminate flooding that has often occurred in the yard of the last house on the street. We are grateful to the County Department of Public Works and Transportation, which had promised the construction for next year, but found the funds in this year's budget.

## Navigating Downtown Bethesda

Finding my destination in the Woodmont Triangle has sometimes been a problem because of the crazy angles of the streets and not knowing the location of the closest garage or parking lot. It should never be a problem again because I have a free booklet entitled "Welcome to Bethesda," which includes an easy-to-read map in the centerfold.

Names, addresses and phone numbers of all kinds of businesses and services are listed, but what I find most helpful after the map is the section on restaurants. They're all there, 200 of them, arranged by nationality and price range (one, two or three \$ signs).

Free copies are available from the Bethesda Urban Partnership by calling (301) 215-6660.

### Calendar

**Monday, March 6** – Town Council Meeting  
**Monday, March 6** –Nominations for Mayor and two Council members  
**Monday, March 6** – Somerset voter registration day  
**Tuesday, March 7** – Batting Cage Committee Meeting  
**Thursday, March 16** – Journal deadline, ads

**Friday, March 17** – Journal deadline: copy  
**Monday, March 27** – MVA’s mobile office in Friendship Heights  
**Monday, March 27** – Quarterly Brown Bag Lunch  
**Wednesday, April 5** – Somerset Election Day  
**Sunday, April 30** – Town Centennial Celebrations

# Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

### Remember Somerset in Your Tax Returns

One of Somerset’s two biggest sources 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 remember to complete this section when filing your taxes. Here is the sample form.

FORM 502 MARYLAND RESIDENT INCOME TAX RETURN  
 RESIDENT OR FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING 2004, ENDING

SOCIAL SECURITY #		SPOUSE'S SOCIAL SECURITY #	
Your First Name	Initial	Last Name	
Spouse's First Name	Initial	Last Name	
PRESENT ADDRESS (No. and street)			
City or Town	State	Zip Code	
Name of county and incorporated city, town or special taxing area in which you were employed on the last day of the tax period (See instructions)	Maryland county	City, town or taxing area <b>TOWN OF SOMERSET</b>	

### Absentee Ballots Available

Absentee ballots will be available in the Town Hall beginning Thursday, March 16. 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 5.

### Sidewalks

Our contractor will clear two inches of snow or more from your sidewalks after a storm, but remember it is your responsibility by Town Code to keep it clear thereafter. The maintenance men are responsible for the Town sidewalks where there are no houses.

### Street Light Out?

Please call Pepco at 1-877-737-2662 to report a street light out. You will need to provide the nearest address to the pole. The bulb should be replaced within 72 hours according to Pepco.

### Trash Pickup

It is Town policy to put trash at the curb no earlier than the night before pickup. Following this rule is important in keeping our streetscape clear and clean. It is also a common courtesy to your neighbors.



## Leaves Not Raked Yet?

If you have not yet raked your leaves, please do so as soon as possible. We are experiencing considerable blockage of our storm drains from leaves that have blown out of yards into the drains. Removal of your leaves is also a courtesy to your neighbors who have already taken care of their leaves and do not wish to keep raking the leaves of others that blow in from nearby.



The way to get rid of any remaining leaves is to put them in your mulch pile or at the curb on Tuesdays and/or Fridays in paper bags or reusable containers.

## Garden Refuse Pickup

J&J resumes twice-a-week collection of garden refuse March 1. Pickups will be on Tuesdays and Fridays as in the past.

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

## HVACR Contractors

Please be aware that all heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR) contractors must be licensed by the State. To check if a HVACR contractor is licensed go to the State Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation Web site: [www.dllr.state.md.us](http://www.dllr.state.md.us) and click on "Occupational and Professional Licensing." For questions or complaints e-mail [jsliwka@dllr.state.md.us](mailto:jsliwka@dllr.state.md.us) or call (410) 230-6260.

## Some Springtime Activities Require Permits

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

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

## Gazette Newspaper Now Available at the Town Hall

Residents who do not receive their Gazette or wish to have extra copies may now pick up a copy from the rack on the Town Hall porch. Copies of the newspaper are delivered each week (usually on Wednesday afternoon).



## MVA Mobile Office

The MVA's mobile office will be in Friendship Heights on Monday, February 27, and Monday, March 27, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## Permits Granted

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

### Trees:

Venice Molivadas, 5403 Greystone Street, to remove two dead pines in her back yard.

Faye Cohen, 5518 Trent Street, to remove a damaged flowering plum in her front yard.

Donna Harman, 4719 Dorset Avenue, to remove a dead apple tree in her front yard.

Kathryn and Barron Williams, 5524 Warwick Place, to remove an uprooted redbud in their back yard.

# Legislation

At the February 6 meeting, the Council:

1. Approved a Town Building Code amendment to define the height of accessory structures. (Vote: Frankel, Kessler, Simmons and Slavin for; Eldridge opposed. Motion passed 4-1.)
2. Approved a Town Code amendment changing the name of the park on Dorset at Surrey from Minipark to Founders Park.
3. Approved a resolution adopting multi-hazard mitigation plan, in order to remain eligible for State and Federal disaster relief funding.

***Thanks to our webmaster, Gayley Knight we now have a Town Calendar on the Town website. Visit [www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com) and click on TOWN CALENDAR at the top left of the home page for Journal deadline dates, town meeting dates and other important dates to remember.***

# Council Activity

At the January 23 Work Session, the Council discussed possible repairs/improvements to the Town Hall and pool bathhouse and authorized the Mayor to obtain engineer bids to assess the foundation of the Town Hall.

At the February 6 meeting, the Council:

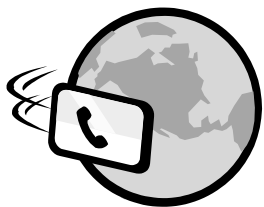
1. Confirmed the Mayor's reappointment of Phyllis Wiesenfelder as chair of the Special Events Committee for one year.
2. Recommended approval to the Historic Preservation Commission and granted a Town building permit with a north side setback waiver of 11½ inches to Arne and Ruth Sorenson, 5810 Warwick Place, subject to HPC approval, receipt of a County permit and submission of Town permit fees and deposit. (Vote: Eldridge, Kessler and Slavin for; Frankel and Simmons opposed. Motion passed 3-2.)
3. Approved a building permit for Robert Menzi and Virginia Biggar, 4505 Cumberland Avenue, to add a rear deck, a one-story mudroom on the left side and an open porch in the front, subject to receipt of a County permit and submission of Town permit fees and deposit.
4. Approved a building permit for Stephen Surko and Elizabeth Thompson, 5500 Uppingham Street, to add a second floor to the rear of their house, subject to receipt of a County permit and submission of Town permit fees and deposit.
5. Discussed the evolving role of the Mayor and Town staff and directed the Clerk-Treasurer to advertise for a second part time staffer.
6. Extended the police enforcement program in Town at eight hours per week for five months and not to exceed \$7,000. (Vote: Eldridge, Simmons and Slavin for; Frankel and Kessler opposed. Motion passed 3-2.)
7. Heard a report from Swimming Pool Committee chair Josh Bobeck on the results of their meeting on possible improvements to the pool and bathhouse area.
8. Approved the bid of Superior Home Works, Inc. to reinforce the ceiling of the bathhouse pump room for \$1,850 plus the cost of the County building permit.
9. Authorized the Mayor to write a letter of support of the General Assembly bill that would increase the authority of municipalities in lower Montgomery County to control development within their borders.
10. Authorized the Mayor to write a letter of support of the General Assembly bill that would permit municipalities to purchase existing street lights from Pepco and contract with another company to maintain them or contract with another company for new lights and maintenance.



## Emergency Phone Network Update

by Corrie Morsie

The Emergency Phone Network is a subscription service paid for by the Town to contact residents in case of an emergency. It would enable us to call everyone in Somerset within an hour of an impending emergency and/or afterward to provide useful information. It was put into place eighteen months ago. Thankfully we've not had to utilize it; however, we do need to provide PORI, the company operating the service, with an updated listing of Town residents.



We need to hear from you by Wednesday March 1<sup>st</sup> if you do not wish to be included in the emergency network or if you wish to add telephone numbers not listed in the 2006 Town Directory. (Call (301) 657-3211 or e-mail [clerk@townofsomerset.com](mailto:clerk@townofsomerset.com)). Each household may list up to three numbers. PORI assures us that the phone numbers on the system will, under no circumstances, be released to any other source.

## **A Traffic Reminder**

from Laurie Gross, Principal Somerset School and the PTA

As Town residents should be aware, during Somerset School drop-off and dismissal times, traffic on Cumberland from Surrey to Warwick and on Warwick from Cumberland to Dorset is limited to one-way. This restriction is in effect on school days from 8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. At those times, drivers may not enter or travel toward the school on “big” Cumberland, nor may they travel downhill on Warwick toward Dorset. Signs announcing this restriction are posted at the intersections of Cumberland and Surrey and of Warwick and Dorset.

The one-way traffic restriction is critical to ensuring the safety of the children of our community and neighboring communities who walk and bike to Somerset School. In addition, the restriction helps facilitate traffic flow at times when there is very heavy traffic from school buses and other vehicles. The Montgomery County crossing guard at the corner of Warwick and Dorset, and the Chevy Chase police officer hired by the Town, are mandated to enforce this restriction. Violators, including Town residents, have been and will be issued citations. The PTA asks neighbors to drive safely, respect the law, and set a good example for our children.

## **Need help finding a Medicare prescription drug plan?**

by Pat Barry

Somerset seniors who want to join the new Medicare Part D Rx program must choose one of 47 drug plans available in our area by May 15, the deadline to get coverage for this year. How do you sort through these options to find the least expensive plan that covers your medications? Town resident Pat Barry, an expert on Part D, offers help.

People who are used to Internet searches (or have someone who can do this for them) can quickly find out which plan covers their drugs at the least expense by going to [www.aarp.org/bulletin/medicare/quick\\_route.html](http://www.aarp.org/bulletin/medicare/quick_route.html). This step-by-step guide provides a short cut through the official plan-comparison finder at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). All you need to enter is your zip code, the name of each of your drugs, their dosage and how often you take them. Results will show all out-of-pocket costs, including copays (which vary greatly among different plans).

For people who can't do this online (and have nobody to help them) Pat Barry offers to run the numbers at no charge. Email her at [patbarry@erols.com](mailto:patbarry@erols.com) (preferably) or call (301) 657-4096. But please, this is for Somerset residents ONLY!

## **Complaint of the Month**

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

A resident recently asked about the Town's door-to-door solicitation policy. She has noticed an increase in the number of people walking around asking for work--especially on Dorset Avenue and while cognizant of people's right to seek employment, she is concerned with the loitering aspect of the situation.

I checked with County Council member Nancy Floreen's office about this and received an informative response. Any 'vendor,' defined as a person over the age of 16 who sells or solicits any goods or services, must have a license, to be displayed or made readily available. Floreen suggests that anyone who does not like door-to-door vendors should post a sign saying "No Trespassing - No Door to Door Solicitations." This gives property owner grounds for civil trespass action against anyone who ignores the sign.

I realize that this is somewhat technical but thought it would be useful information for all of us.

## On My Mind

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

Yes, I voted for the extension of the police pilot project. Thanks to the multitude of residents who called, e-mailed or stopped me on the street to express their views on this important topic. I am glad I was able to be pro-active in obtaining opinions on this matter and appreciate the time that people took and the thoughtful comments made. As you may recall, I did change my previous position in making my vote.

It seemed to me that while there was no hard data to confirm that drivers are more observant of stop signs and speed limits, the majority at this time believe that we are better off with the police, especially a lot of families with younger children, or at least we should continue our fact finding and discussion for another five months. I am still not convinced that this is a permanent solution, however.

Of course now the public debate will continue and we will now have the time to explore alternatives, such as better signage, to address the problem. And I hope that residents of Somerset will continue to publicly express their views. There are some good ideas on the table.

On another topic, I am glad that there has been good attendance at our work sessions on the town hall and poolhouse. A lot of excellent ideas are emerging, and people are being serious and contemplative about what are the Town needs in our public structures. I hope that the decision making process will continue in such manner and that all the stakeholders will have a chance to tell us what they think. I will be advocating the scheduling of another work session in March as we continue to work towards our goals.

## Stemming Erosion along a Portion of the Town's Creek

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

On February 8, Mayor Behr, Council member Judy Frankel, Clerk-Treasurer Tom Carter, and PNRC members Jeff Lape and Corrie Morsey met with Dan Harper and John Hollister of the County Department of Environmental Protection. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss erosion control repairs to Little Falls Branch between the bridge and North Park Apartments.

In 2001, Montgomery County set in place erosion control measures along our creek, south of the bridge. During an inspection tour of the area last March with Harper, it was noted that vegetation intended to stabilize the creek banks had either not taken hold or had been swept away by the force of stormwater. Additionally, soil and rocks had been displaced downstream. Harper revisited the area in August with County staffers.

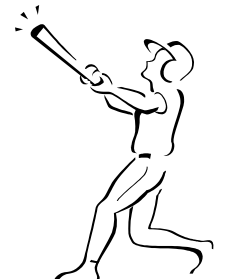
At this month's meeting, Harper noted that the erosion had not increased in the past six months even though we've had lots of rain. Consequently, rather than redoing their project utilizing large rocks and taking out trees, it was decided to plant (i) additional shade-loving trees and (ii) seeds of other shade-loving trees. It is anticipated these projects will be implemented this spring.

Growth of shade-loving trees is significantly slower than trees that thrive in sunny locations. We'll have to be patient -- it may be a couple of years before we know whether or not the new plantings thrive on the steep, shady slopes.

## Batting Cage Committee Meeting

by Chair, Richard Furcolo

The Batting Cage Committee will conduct its annual meeting at the Town Hall on Tuesday, March 7 beginning at 7:00p.m. All are welcome to attend.





# Residents' Letters

From Michele Friedman (Essex)

When choosing where to invest, it's an easy decision for me. We should invest in our town's "secret sauce" that makes Somerset such a coveted place to live. I think that "secret sauce" is in the small town community feeling here. And a way to enhance that feeling is by creating opportunities for residents to want to come together more frequently doing the things they enjoy most at times most convenient for them. We have a very diverse population in Somerset and a year round community center could greatly enhance community life for seniors, children, working people and others by including facilities such as a gym, reading library, recreational space for gatherings, art studio, bingo/card parties and a teen room. The fact that its in walking distance, would be ours to do what we want with and that it could be low cost to operate and maintain are all pluses.

From Mark Muro (Dorset)

It has been good to watch the Somerset community sort through its needs for repairs and improvements at the Town Hall and pool and begin groping toward a sensible combined solution.

However, I want to suggest that we think carefully about the specifications of a possible year-round community center at the pool, and not be penny-wise and pound-foolish. Above all, it would be odd to upgrade the pool facility without trying to make room in the plan for heart of the summertime experience there: exercise! For many of us, exercise and community are intertwined, so let us at least explore the possibility of including in an enhanced year-round facility a modest fitness center (with basic workout facilities) and a basement-level lap lane or two. Such facilities would be a wonderful addition to our town for our increasingly health-minded seniors, our active families, and our harried career people.

From Blair Levin and Patricia Friedman (Grantham).

We want to add our family's voice in support of an expanded community center for Somerset. One of the highlights of each of the dozen years we have lived here has been the summer season of combining exercise with seeing friends at the pool in a spontaneous, informal setting. We'd like to see an expanded community center, with a multi-purpose room, a work out/exercise room, and a reading room, which would give us an opportunity to enjoy such gatherings year round. Our community has to replace the current bathhouse so the marginal cost of adding additional facilities will prove minor in comparison to the benefits it will bring our families and community for many years to come.

## Come to a Monday Brown Bag Lunch in March

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin



Our quarterly "brown bag" lunch will be on a Monday, next month. Mark your calendar for March 27 from noon to 1 p.m. at the Town Hall. As always, all are invited.

So, please join me and the Mayor and a group of neighbors as we share a meal and talk about Town, County and State issues. Bring something to share and don't forget a drink.

Ice, napkins and tableware are provided.

Any questions? Call me at (301) 654-6767.

## Want to Join the Cub Scouts?

by Mark Oxley

Attention parents of boys, Kindergarten through 2nd grade! Cub Scout Pack 52 is loaded with great Somerset boys, ages 6-11, and is looking for new Cub Scouts to join as Tiger Cubs (1st Grade); Wolves (2nd Grade) and Bears (3rd Grade) in the coming season (starting September 2006). If you and your boy would like to get an early look at our fun activities, check out one or both of the following Pack events:

- Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m. join us for our spring conservation project when we will cleanup the woods and stream surrounding the Somerset pool. Wear gloves, boots, rugged pants and prepare to get dirty and a little wet as we clean up the woods and improve stream crossings.
- Tuesday, April 25, 6:30 p.m. watch as the Raingutter Regatta Scouts race custom made balsa wood boats at the Somerset Town Hall. We are planning to sell pizza or hot dogs that night as well.

If you want to know more about Cub Scouts, please e-mail me at [MarkO@OutdoorIllumination.com](mailto:MarkO@OutdoorIllumination.com)."

## Calling all Somerset 4<sup>th</sup> Graders -- Essay Contest Deadline

by Council member and Chair, Communications Committee, Maryland Municipal League (MML), Jeffrey Slavin

Once again, one of the MML's premiere programs, the "If I Were Mayor, I Would..." essay contest is about to get in full swing. Open to all fourth graders -- from public, private and parochial schools -- who live or go to school in Maryland, this year the competition (by way of a specific question) lets students express their views on how they would involve citizens in making plans to control growth and protect the quality of life in their city or town.

There will be one winning essay from each of the League's 11 districts, all of whom will receive a \$250 savings bond, an award plaque and recognition at a major event in Annapolis. There will also be random winners just for participating.

Essays must be submitted by Saturday, April 1. Further details are available at [www.mdmmunicipal.org](http://www.mdmmunicipal.org) or by calling me at (301) 654-6767.

I hope that all Somerset 4<sup>th</sup> graders will enter the contest this year and that one of you will be a winner!

## Helping Others -- Volunteer Update

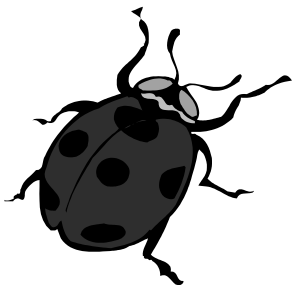
by Mary Geffroy, David Stern, Sarah Morse, Jeffrey Slavin  
Somerset Community Service Corps

Starting this month, the Town is launching an ongoing collection of toiletry items to be donated to Rainbow Place, a shelter in Rockville for homeless women. Items such as: personal-sized soap, shampoo, conditioner, mouthwash, lotion, toothpaste, hair brushes, chapstick and tissues may be donated. All citizens interested and willing to help can pack such items in plastic bags and drop them in a new large white tub now located on Mary Geffroy's front porch at 4808 Essex Avenue. Mary Geffroy and Jeffrey Slavin, (and any other willing volunteer) periodically will deliver the collected items to Rainbow Place. Contact Mary at (301) 986-5171 or [mary@senecaprop.com](mailto:mary@senecaprop.com) if you would like to help deliver the items or if you have any questions.

Additionally, our Community Service Corps group is scheduling another Community Service Day in April and welcomes participation on the day itself or in advanced planning.

## Project Ladybug

by Faith and Chip Breen



"Stormwater runoff is water that washes off the land after a rainstorm or snowmelt, carrying sediments, excess nutrients, and other toxins [pesticides] and contaminants directly into streams and rivers. Unchecked stormwater runoff can severely degrade water quality and fish and wildlife habitat and [our drinking water which comes from the Potomac River.]" From the Potomac Conservancy and the Nature Conservancy *Good Neighbor Handbook*.

Last month's presentation at the Town Hall by Bryan Seipp (arranged by George Wyeth (Falstone)) was very educational. We learned that because Somerset was designed to drain its water quickly into the street and out to the drainpipes and because of our Town's proximity to the Potomac River, the use of pesticides on our lawns can have adverse impacts on both the quality of the Potomac River; and, because the Potomac supplies our drinking water, on the quality of our drinking water.

The good news is that there are pesticide alternatives that are effective in maintaining the curb appeal of Somerset homes. Additionally, if you want to continue to use pesticides, there are easy ways to address the potential toxic runoff. According to the *Good Neighbor Handbook*, these four practical ways can be used to minimize runoff:

- Downspout diversion – this is the simplest solution, you can just divert water into landscaped and vegetated areas.
- Rain barrels – place rain barrels under water spouts to collect water.
- Rain gardens – these specially designed gardens are placed in low-lying areas, where they capture stormwater runoff. We have a rain garden in our yard and it works very well. For more information, <http://www.mninter.net/~stack/rain/>
- Permeable pavements – pavement blocks, porous concrete and porous asphalt that let water infiltrate into the ground.

For additional information on these alternatives as well as other information on dealing with runoff, see the Potomac Conservancy webpage at [www.potomac.org](http://www.potomac.org)

## Looking back -- An Occasional column celebrating Somerset's history

### Wax Pack Memories

by James Rowen

I grew up on Warwick Place, a quiet hilly street at the edge of some woods in the Town of Somerset. We moved into our house in 1951. My mother Alice still lives there. Life as a kid there in the 1950s revolved around baseball. You were ready for the day if you had a ball, bat and glove.



Somerset Elementary School sat at the top of my street. It had swings and a jungle gym and other equipment for the little kids and a playground with two baseball diamonds and backstops for the older kids. There was no grass: the surface was covered with little gray pieces of gravel. Kids were always kicking the gravel at each other and throwing it by the handful into the air to make dust clouds.

The neighborhood kids returned to the playground after school to play a softball game called “workup”. There were no teams. Just hitting and fielding. You progressed through the positions as outs were made – you worked up – from the outfield to the infield, to pitcher, to catcher, to batter. Really, all you wanted to do was bat.

...We lived just five houses down the street from the playground. It took only a few minutes to run home after school, get a snack, change clothes, loop my glove on my handlebars and bike back up the street. Sometimes I beat the other kids to the playground so I got to bat first. It was great having the school on your street.

...And we collected baseball cards. They came five, I think, to a nickel pack. Getting Senators was the only goal. You’d buy them at the People’s Drugstore on Wisconsin Avenue, in a little shopping center that stood by itself near an empty field where we played football. We called it “the field.” It was better to play and fall on than the gravel playground at Somerset Elementary.

There was a trolley turn-around for a line that ended behind the shopping center. Riding the trolley cars was great fun because they were like trains and rocked a little from side-to-side. We rode them a lot when we went into DC, and we’d stand a long time at the back entrance of the People’s watching the trolleys approach the station, let people off and make their slow loop back. Dad knew I liked trains. He took me to a switching yard somewhere in DC and we’d watch trains for hours. He also got me Lionel trains. They were sold when I went off to college.



There were other places to buy cards beside the People’s. There was Carrier Drugs in Bethesda, and hobby shops at Chevy Chase Circle and near a Sears, Roebuck store farther down into DC on Wisconsin Avenue, but People’s was the closest store for cards to Somerset. The clerks there knew us, too. They’d say: “Here come those kids for baseball cards.”

...Friendship Heights was across the creek on the other side of the woods. Going through the woods was the shortcut between the neighborhoods. It’s how a lot of the Friendship Heights kids got to our street and to school. All the kids knew their way around the woods and how to hop across the creek on big stones without falling in. There was even a

strong rope tied to a tree branch below the crossing in the woods behind lower Warwick Place. You could swing across from the Somerset side to the Friendship Heights side on the rope.



There were bends and pools in the creek, but it was not deep or clean enough to swim in. There were frogs and minnows in the water that you trapped in glass jars, and there were box turtles along the banks. I kept one in a cardboard box as a pet for a while, but it didn't do anything, and I felt sorry for it, so I let it go behind our house where a storm drain emptied into flat marshy land near the creek.

...Developers tore down a lot of Friendship Heights, and some of the woods, and built high-rose housing, office buildings and stores that surround the small shopping center where we bought our baseball cards.

My Dad was a reporter, not a politician, but he got elected to the Somerset Town Council to try and keep the developers from destroying the woods. He eventually became council vice-president and they had some success.

When he retired from the council, the town gave him a framed photograph of the woods and the waterfalls he helped preserve\*, and our family is still proud of what he had done, though you can see the high-rises from our house through the trees. It's still a shock to see those buildings. They look especially close in the winter when the leaves have fallen.

\*Editor's Note: The photograph was donated back to the Town by Alice Rowen after Hobart Rowen's death in 1995. It now hangs in the Town Hall entry way.

James Rowen is a writer living in Milwaukee. These are excerpts from a longer piece about James' childhood in Somerset, which has been donated to Somerset's Centennial Scrapbook project. Requests for the full story, questions about or submissions to the centennial scrapbook may be directed to Donna Harman at [donna.harman@nist.gov](mailto:donna.harman@nist.gov).



## County News

### Want to Learn About Recycling?

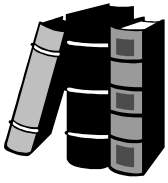
Montgomery County is offering a free six-week program, 'Behind the Scenes' on its recycling program that includes tours of the County's award-winning solid waste management facilities beginning April 5. Students are welcome. For information and to register, visit the Division of Solid Waste Services' website at: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/index.asp](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/index.asp) or call (240) 777-6461

### All About People

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

Artist **LILA SNOW** (Essex) is scheduled for a solo exhibition of her work at International Visions Gallery, 2629 Connecticut Avenue, NW, opposite the Woodley Park Metro stop from June 14 to the end of July (phone (202) 234-5112). There will be a reminder in a future column but mark your calendars now. Lila recently gave me a brief report on the progress of her grandchildren. Grandson **ALEX**, a freshman at Vassar, was a member of the fencing team that beat Yale for the first time in memory. Granddaughter **JUSTINE** was the lead angel in "The Nutcracker" performed by Ballet BC and the Calgary Ballet in Vancouver, BC, where she lives. And Granddaughter **GENEVIEVE** is now at the Putney School in Vermont. Also, you can still watch Lila talking about the arts on Montgomery Municipal Cable, Channel 16 every Monday at 7:00 p.m...





Internationally known and locally popular **TORIE CLARKE** (Dorset) has a new book out -- her first -- "Lipstick On A Pig: Winning in the No-Spin Era by Someone Who Knows the Game." As the former Chief of Communications at the Pentagon, Torie draws on this and her other high-level experiences to teach politicians and executives how to embrace transparency and communicate honestly, directly and frequently with their constituents to build better relationships and diffuse scandal when necessary. Fascinating. Hopefully a few of the tips she doles out she learned as a Somerset resident! The book is available online and in local bookstores. Torie is pleased with the publication but seems most proud to have "the back" of her three children and husband **BRIAN GRAHAM**...Another resident who frequently appears on national television, **NORM ORNSTEIN** (Surrey) has a new book forthcoming called "The Broken Branch" about the "mess" in Congress. Look for details next month. I got this news from his wife, super-lawyer **JUDY HARRIS**, whom I ran into at the National Abortion Rights Action League dinner last month. Judy bought a table and invited all the brand new women lawyers at her powerhouse firm, Reed Smith -- along with her dear friend and generation-mate **ESTHER FINKELSTEIN** (Surrey). Judy said, "These young women, who were born decades after Roe, really found the evening to be quite an eye-opener. Something they never even thought about. They view me and my generation like Susan B. Anthony!"...

Another Somerset Artist is in the news, as **CAROL BARSHA** (Essex) has been invited to participate in world renowned artists Mark di Suvero and Rirkrit Tiranavija's "Peace Tower" at this year's Whitney Biennial 2006: Day for Night in New York City. This is quite exciting as Carol has been asked to create a panel for the project which is a reprise of the "Artists Tower Against the Vietnam War" which took place in 1966 in Los Angeles. At that time, nearly 400 of the best artists on earth, including Judy Chicago, Elaine de Kooning, Roy Lichtenstein and Mark Rothko contributed panels and many of them have been invited again. Carol is in tremendous company. It will be worth a visit north. Carol's 24" X 24" oil on masonite painting for this project incorporates the image of a bird's nest, a theme she has pursued of late. This work and much more can be seen on her new website, [www.carolbarsha.com](http://www.carolbarsha.com). Don't miss it...



Athletic **STEVE FRIEDMAN** (Essex) has been elected Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults ([www.ulmanfund.org](http://www.ulmanfund.org)). This was one of the first and largest organizations nationally to offer a comprehensive approach to supporting the young adult cancer community. Many of you know that Steve is a cancer survivor himself and he sets a great example by giving back in this way...Finally, I got a nice email from **DENNIS HORN** (Surrey) after our recent snow that I felt needed to be shared. He wrote that he is "never so glad to live in Somerset as when the snow falls: Dire predictions and snow flakes followed by efficient snow plows and happy children and neighbors sledding and shoveling. It is great to live in Somerset. Kudos to Town management." This is such a nice sentiment that I know is shared by many who truly understand the value of living in a municipality and appreciate the hard work of our elected officials and staff.

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

Richard Kessler, Council V.P., 4914 Cumberland Ave., 301-654-2699  
Tom Eldridge, 5605 Warwick Pl., 301-656-3354  
Judy Frankel, 5528 Uppingham St., 301-657-8875  
Lesley Simmons, 4723 Cumberland Ave., 240-497-1876  
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](http://www.townofsomerset.com)  
E-mail: [clerk@townofsomerset.com](mailto:clerk@townofsomerset.com)  
TTY users call Maryland Relay

**Deadlines: Ads March 16, Copy March 17**

# 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](tel:301-654-2165).

## WANTED

TEMPORARY GARAGE SPACE. B-  
CC senior seeking to rent space for  
one month to complete construction of  
rowing scull. Will move/store your  
garage contents if necessary. Call Ted,  
[301-656-8773](tel:301-656-8773).

## PART-TIME

NANNY/HOUSEKEEPER. M-Th,  
5-7 or 7:30 p.m. to keep company  
of my 6-year-old after school.  
Includes light housekeeping,  
dishes, laundry and ironing. Must  
have good references. More  
work/time depending on your  
availability. Driving a plus. Call  
[301-656-3533](tel:301-656-3533).

## MISCELLANEOUS

BADMINTON ANYONE? We meet  
every Wednesday morning from 9:30-  
11:00 a.m. at Saint Albans School Old  
Gymnasium, Garfield St.,  
Washington, DC. The season runs  
from September to May. Join any  
time. All levels. We play for fun! Call  
Jossine Josz, 301-961-5017 or e-mail  
[jossinejosz@msn.com](mailto:jossinejosz@msn.com) for more  
information.

## SERVICES

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.

## HELP WANTED

The Town staff is looking for a part-  
time employee (14-20 hours/week) to  
serve as Assistant Clerk-Treasurer. In  
this position, the prospective  
employee will type correspondence  
and reports, assist in bookkeeping and  
financial reports, handle telephonic  
and walk-in requests, process Town  
Hall rentals, assemble Town Council  
meeting packets and file documents.  
For more information, call Tom at  
(301) 657-3211.

## WANTED

SOMERSET HOME. We are a family  
of three currently renting in Somerset.  
We'd like to make this lovely  
community our home. If you are  
aware of any opportunities coming up  
in the next few months, please let us  
know. Call the Capoors, 301-986-  
8605.

## FOR RENT

SOMERSET HOME. Beautiful, newly  
renovated 4 bedroom, 2½ bath at 4823  
Cumberland Avenue. LR (with  
fireplace), DR, family room, enclosed  
(heated) porch, new kitchen and baths,  
carpeted basement with washer and  
dryer. Gorgeous tree-lined back yard.  
Available March 1. Call 301-656-  
6456.

*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.*

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# PRELIMINARY AGENDA

## REGULAR MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL

*Monday, March 6, 2006 - 7:30 P.M.*

1. Approval of minutes of February 6 regular meeting and February 13 work session – 7:30.
2. Discussion of financial report – 7:35.
3. Confirmation of Mayor’s reappointment of Jeffrey Slavin and Phyllis Wiesenfelder and appointment of Lyndsey Van Vliet-Gerber for two-year terms on Special Events Committee – 7:40.
4. Confirmation of Mayor’s appointments to Batting Cage Committee: Richard Furcolo for another year as chair; Dave Fellows for another two-year term; and Rodd Macklin and David Sapin for two-year term – 7:45.
5. Confirmation of Mayor’s appointment of Marc Geffroy to Board of Supervisors of Elections for three-year term ending December 31, 2009 – 7:50.
6. Nominations for Mayor and two Council member positions for two-year terms and date for candidates forum – 7:55.
7. Action on six-month extension of building permit for Andrew Bartley and Jill Herscot, 4909 Cumberland Avenue, to build a two-and-a-half story house with attached garage – 8:05.
8. Mayor’s report – 8:10.
9. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 8:20.
10. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:30.
11. Five-Year Fiscal Plan hearing and discussion – 8:40.
12. Report of Swimming Pool Committee on recommendations for repairs/improvements to swimming pool complex – 9:00.
13. Report by Bill Brenner on proposals for improving Town Hall footings and foundation – 9:20.
14. Introduction of Town Code amendment changing portions of Section 9-107. School Zones and Traffic to make signage and speed limit comply with standard practice and recommendations of Montgomery County Public Schools and Department of Public Works and Transportation traffic experts – 9:35.
15. Action on Arbor Day proclamation – 9:40.
16. New business – 9:45.
17. Adjournment – 9:50.

**Save the date -**

**Celebrate 100 years a Town**

Street party, ice cream, social, historic tours and more....

Sunday, April 30, 2006 from 1 to 4:30 p.m.  
At Founders' Park on Dorset Avenue at Surrey Street

Watch for more information in future issues of the Journal..