



SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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1906 – 2006 Celebrating One Hundred Years A Town

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Calendar

Saturday and Sunday June 24 - 25

Heritage Days exhibit and lecture

Friday, June 30

Deadline for completing the Westbard/River Road Development Survey

Tuesday July 4

Town Picnic

Wednesday, July 5

Town Council Meeting

Saturday, July 8

Adult Pool Party

Thursday, July 20

Journal Deadline ads and copy

Monday, July 24

MVA's mobile office in Friendship Heights

Don't forget to check the Town website throughout the month for an up-to-date calendar. Go to www.townofsomerset.com and click on "Calendar"

Notice our new "Somerset Life" section in this month's Journal. This section includes articles of a more personal nature. To protect residents' privacy this section will not appear in the on-line version of the Journal, which appears on the Town website at www.townofsomerset.com.

One hundred years ago only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school. So, while Somerset (together with neighboring Drummond) celebrated July 4 with races and contests, folk dancing, ice cream and fireworks, there was no recognition of graduates as Somerset does today!

Mayor's Den

By Walter Behr

Celebrate With Neighbors at July 4th Picnic-Jamboree



Fireworks at the Mall are grand the night of Independence Day, but nothing beats the Somerset picnic celebration in the Town Hall yard for action, fun and mingling with neighbors and public officials.

Arrive promptly at noon to claim one of the newly refurbished picnic tables. Enjoy ice cream, cake and punch in the meeting room. A Boy Scout color guard will lead off the ceremony, followed by the Star-Spangled Banner, recognition of graduates and swimming champions, introduction of public officials and an assortment of games climaxed by the egg toss.

Children will get a kick out of inspecting fire and rescue trucks. Parents will drool over an assortment of antique cars.

Youngsters and adults will be fascinated to view a very special Centennial project: a kids' time capsule and contents. If you miss this opportunity, you will have to wait until 2056, when the Town's 150th birthday will be celebrated.

Another special attraction will be a display of Maryland Environmental Service products.

At 2:00 p.m., fire and rescue vehicles and antique cars will lead a parade to the swimming pool. The fun will continue there with more games and prizes.

Happy 4th to one and all!

More on Flood Insurance

If you are interested in FEMA insurance, as described in last month's Town Journal, be sure to notify your homeowner's insurance company that Somerset's Community Number is 240134. Unfortunately, FEMA did not mention this number in their official approval notice to the Town.

This is a reminder that you do not have to be located near a body of water to be at risk of flood damage. Floods often result from storms, wind-driven rain and melting snow. Another cause of floods is rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters such as experienced by Somerset residents on Dorset and Warwick as well as "Little" Cumberland before the new school storm drain was activated.

For further information, call 1-800-427-4661 or visit www.floodsmart.gov, the official site of the national flood insurance program.

Prepare for Summer Storms

Whether or not you have flood insurance, it is important for everyone to have a family emergency plan in place, suggests Pepco, which is taking its own steps to prepare for bad weather now that the 2006 hurricane season has arrived. The probability of at least one predicted Category 3, 4 or 5 hurricane is "up significantly this year," according to the National Hurricane Center.

Pepco advises that any family plan should include finding the safest areas in your home during an emergency and in your community if you need to evacuate, and must include an emergency supply kit. Visit the "Emergency Preparedness" page at www.pepco.com for specific information on what should go into that emergency kit plus other tips on preparing for emergencies.



Basics include plenty of batteries along with flashlights and battery-operated radio, bottled water, non-perishable food, a hand-operated can opener, copies of important documents in a watertight resealable plastic bag and first aid items.

A good place to store your kit is in a cooler; it will keep everything together and can be used during an emergency to help with short-term food storage.

This kit should contain what your family would need to be self-sufficient for a minimum of three days. Those three days are necessary to allow emergency responders to assess the damage and the impacts of the storm and then organize needed services.

Audit Committee Vacancy

Chip Breen, who has been a member of the Town Audit Committee since its formation, is moving from Somerset, so we need a replacement to serve on this four-person group. If you are interested, please submit a brief statement of your qualifications to the Town Hall by Monday, July 10.

Duties of the committee are twofold:

1. Review the draft of the annual report prepared by an independent auditor and meet with the auditor.
2. Conduct any investigations of Town financial procedures and practices which seem appropriate.

The Council and Mayor thank you for your service, Chip, as well as other members of the committee, Bob Verkourteren, chair, Judy Frankel and Harry Freeman.

Sewage in Creek Unlikely to Recur

The recent pollution of Little Falls Branch was caused by a stoppage in the sanitary sewer that caused the sewage to back up into the storm drain and from there into the creek. A similar occurrence is highly unlikely since WSSC has temporarily plugged the connection between the sanitary sewer and the storm drain.

Jeff Lape and I met with representatives of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) about last month's incident since the storm drain involved is a huge pipe that permits Metro (WMATA) to discharge 180,000 gallons per day of groundwater from their tunnel into the creek below the bridge on Wisconsin Avenue, between Somerset's Vinton Park and the Somerset House highrises. (The flow passes through an oil/water separator that removes oil and solids.)

The connection - now temporarily plugged - was installed to divert flow to the sanitary sewer when Metro cleans its tunnel, thus keeping the oil from polluting Little Falls Branch.

Metro is now designing a permanent valve that will replace the plug and permit it to discharge oil and solid materials to the sanitary sewer, yet prevent another creek pollution incident.

Somerset's Centennial Celebration and Book Honored



Lesley Simmons and Walter Behr receive MPI Award from MPI President Wayne Goldstein

Montgomery Preservation, Inc. bestowed an award on Somerset earlier this month for the multi-faceted Centennial celebration and the book, *Somerset: One Hundred Years a Town* (copies still available at the Town Hall, price \$20). Lesley Simmons, Councilmember and chair of the Town History Committee, and I accepted the certificates of recognition.

Keynote speaker at the event was international architect Cesar Pelli, who emphasized the importance of preserving the Comsat Lab building off of Route 270 in Clarksburg.

A Somerset School Winner

In the past few years one of my favorite activities as Mayor has been talking to Somerset School fourth graders about municipal government and the job of Mayor, subjects that fit into their curriculum. I encourage the children to enter the annual Maryland Municipal League (MML) essay contest entitled, "If I were Mayor, I Would . . ."

It is a pleasure to report that the winner in our MML District (Montgomery County) is John Gallagher, a Somerset School student who received a \$250 savings bond as a prize. What John would do if Mayor is institute a comic strip in the Somerset Town Journal and the school newspaper featuring the "Environmental Avenger, who would fight enemies such as General Global Warming, Mr. Methane, Sergeant Sprawl and Toxic Waste Woman."

The comic strip's pro-environment messages would influence children who, in turn, "would encourage their parents to drive less, walk more and take public transportation . . . or, better yet, use vehicles that do not use gasoline at all such as bikes." John would also limit "McMansions," which he describes as "large houses on small plots of land that make neighboring houses look sad in comparison."

John doesn't live in the Town of Somerset, but if he did, I believe we could look forward to competitive campaigns for Mayor a few years hence.

Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

Office Schedule in July

The office will be closed Tuesday, July 4, a Federal holiday.

Found

A pair of sunglasses was found on the tennis courts on June 8. If you think they might belong to you, call Tom at (301) 657-3211.



Somerset Quiet Hours

Don't forget Town noise limitations between the hours of 9 p.m. and 9 a.m. 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.

Vacation Precautions

A few precautions may enhance your vacation this year. Consider these before you leave:

1. Cancel your newspapers and get a neighbor to pick up newspapers and flyers that are deposited on your property.
2. Arrange to have your lawn cut while you are away.
3. Give a key to a neighbor just in case of emergency.
4. Arrange to have a neighbor, friend or relative know how to turn off your security system if it is activated.
5. Consider putting timers on some of the lights in your home and set them to come on at different times. You might even turn a radio on or put it on a timer.

Lock Doors, Cars and Garages



It's that time of year when you are out in your back yard and you have left your front door unlocked. This makes it very tempting for unwanted visitors. Please lock your doors.

It would also be a good idea to remember to lock your car and garage doors. Bikes can easily be taken out of unlocked garages. Daylight hours are getting longer and more people are walking around Town. It is better to be safe than sorry.

Town Trees and Grounds

With summer coming and the spring rains letting up, we ask you to please water the Town trees in your yards when no rain has fallen in several days.

Don't forget, the Grounds Ordinance states that it shall be the duty of owners of all dwellings to maintain the land between their property lines and the street curb in "good and orderly condition," to clean the sidewalks in front of their property and keep them free from overhanging shrubbery.

Please do not put grass down the storm drains. Also, do not use the trash containers around Town for your personal household trash. Additionally, there is no dumping at the pool parking lot or at the end of Warwick Place..



MVA Mobile Office

The MVA's mobile office will be in Friendship Heights on Monday, July 24, 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:

Robert and Patricia Gage, 4805 Dorset Avenue, to remove a large cedar in their front yard that is threatening the house's foundation.

Jill Lesser and Jonathan Diesenhaus, 4711 Trent Court, to remove a large, dead silver maple in their front yard.

Fences:



Alan Jacobs, Steve Himelfarb and Gail Flory, 4604 Dorset Avenue, to erect a 6-foot cedar fence along their east property line.

Fauzia Najm, 4602 Dorset Avenue, to replace the existing chain link fence along her east property line with a 5-foot cedar fence.

Jim Losey and Alex Acosta, 4700 Essex Avenue, to enclose their side and back yards with a cedar fence.

Curbs: Thomas C. Holden, 4810 Falstone Avenue, to replace his driveway and apron.

Legislation

At the June 5 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Introduced a Town Code amendment to increase the number of copies of plans required with a building permit application.
2. Introduced a Town Code amendment to modify the definition of a replacement fence or wall.
3. Introduced a Town Code amendment to clarify the requirement to remove certain fences as a condition of erecting new fences.
4. Introduced a Town Code amendment to establish a procedure for granting permission to remove trees on Town property that are less than four inches in diameter.

Council Activity

At the June 1 closed meeting, the Council met with our Town Attorney and an engineer to discuss construction issues and stormwater drainage at 5403 Trent Street.

At the June 5 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Made the following fund transfers for FY-06:

<u>Amount</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
\$2,500	GF Contingency	GF Refuse
\$1,000	GF Contingency	GF Recycles
\$1,000	GF Contingency	GF Misc./Engr.
\$5,000	CPF Contingency	CPF Trees & Grounds
\$3,000	CPF Contingency	CPF Office



2. Reappointed Tom Carter as Clerk-Treasurer for FY-07.
3. Confirmed the Mayor's appointment of David Sacks to the Batting Cage Committee for a term expiring in March 2008.
4. Noted that the Mayor had approved the stormwater drainage plan for the new house of Michael and Sally Christian, 4718 Essex Avenue, and that no further action by the Council was necessary.
5. Postponed action on police contracting until the July meeting. (Vote: Eldridge, Kessler, Simmons and Slavin for; Frankel abstained. Motion passed 4-0.)
6. Approved the VIKA, Inc. proposal to conduct a boundary and topographic survey for the swimming pool complex at a cost of \$10,000.
7. Rescinded last month's decision to conduct a natural resources inventory survey of the swimming pool area since it does not appear that we will need a special exception for minor construction at the pool.
8. Authorized the Mayor to spend up to \$1,500 for a water cooler for the pool.
9. Approved a contract with American Tennis Courts, Inc. to repair and color-coat the tennis courts at a cost of \$10,125.
10. Approved a permit for Robert Chlopak and Ellen Globokar, 4917 Dorset Avenue, to erect a five-foot, partially open fence in their side yard, parallel to Devon Lane, under Town Code Section 6-714, Exceptions Granted by Town Council.
11. Heard the Mayor's announcement of an emergency expenditure of \$2,275.00 for repairs to the diving board, guard stand platforms and slide water line at the pool in order to pass the County inspection.

12. Authorized the Mayor to solicit bids with and without the removal of the fireplace and chimney for repair of the Town Hall's foundation. (Vote: Eldridge, Frankel and Kessler for; Simmons and Slavin opposed. Motion passed 3-2.)

13. Approved the Swimming Pool Committee's recommendation for the following pool expenses:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| (a) Early morning swim, 3 months | \$1,200 |
| (b) Adult party | 2,500 |
| (c) Water aerobics | 900 |
| (d) Small tables | 700 |
| (e) Potluck party & movie night | 250 |

(Vote: Eldridge, Kessler, Simmons and Slavin for; Frankel abstained. Motion passed 4-0.)

14. Set Tuesday, June 20, at 7:30 p.m. for a special Council meeting to formulate a list of improvements for the swimming pool complex to present to architects as a basis for their proposals.

Early Bird Swim is Free!

by Sarah Morse



The pool is open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 6:30 to 7:30 for lap swimming (only). At the June Council meeting, the Town Council approved the pool committee's request for money to fund the program. So, there will be no fee for the sessions. Early Bird swim will continue until August 25. The pool house will be open for changing at 6:15 -- before the pool opens -- and will stay open another 15 minutes after the pool closes.

So, all you early risers, come check out the water at 6:30. So far, there have been a core of hardy souls braving rain, 52 degree weather and more to do their laps.

Are You in the Know?

by Council member Lesley Simmons

Some weeks ago two unlucky residents were the victims of crime in Somerset, one burglary and one attempted burglary. Shortly after, those residents who are on the Town broadcast e-mail list were alerted that the crimes had taken place and were given tips on how to avoid becoming a victim. Those who weren't on the list were alerted by a piece in the Town Journal -- but that was many days later.

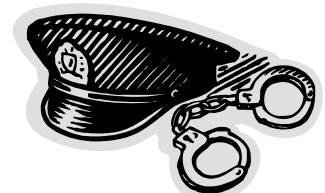
Fast forward a couple of weeks and an overflowing sewer line polluted the creek running through Town and past the swimming pool. Again, those residents on the Town broadcast e-mail list received an alert right away and were warned of the danger of going near the stream -- important information to residents with young children who might play in the stream or those who walk their dogs in the area.

There are currently 350 residents (about one third) "in the know". If you aren't one of them, why not sign up today while you're thinking about it? It doesn't cost a cent and may provide untold benefits in the future. Simply send an e-mail to clerk@townofsomerset.com with "Sign me up for broadcast e-mail" in the subject line and list your name and address in the body of the e-mail.

Police Pilot Program Up for Discussion in July

by Council member Tom Eldridge

Starting last September, the Town hired Chevy Chase Village Police officers to perform certain kinds of traffic enforcement work in Somerset. The program ran for five months, and was extended in February through the end of June 2006. Decisions about the nature of the enforcement and schedule were made by a task force of three Town Council members.



The initial plan was to have the Village Police focus on traffic enforcement -- stop sign and speeding violations. The Town hired the police to provide 8 hours coverage a week at \$36.50 per hour for 5 months at a total cost of \$5,840.

As of the February meeting, the police had issued more than 40 tickets to people for stop sign violations on Cumberland, Deal, Devon, Dorset, Essex, Falstone, Surrey and Warwick. Although some residents were stopped, none were stopped twice.

Following a number of vandalism incidents in Town, including at the school, the Task Force requested that the police spend more time in January patrolling the Town, which they did. They also investigated a number of suspicious incidents.

In February, the Council approved an additional amount up to \$8,600 for the program, equating to 12 hours per week for five months. However, the Village Police were short of personnel during the first three months of the program and could not provide 12 hours a week of coverage.

Then, at the May Council meeting, residents petitioned the Council to increase police presence in Town following a number of burglaries and attempted burglaries in Somerset in April. In response, the Council gave the Mayor the discretion to hire off-duty police for no more than 40 hours, and added \$25,000 in the budget for the next fiscal year for hiring police.

During May, the Mayor did contract for 40 hours of work by an off-duty Montgomery County Police officer who patrolled the Town and issued a number of parking tickets. The Mayor also requested and received increased patrols from on-duty Montgomery County Police.

Also in May, in response to these security concerns of residents, the Task Force sought and received increased hours from the Chevy Chase Village police, and requested that the Village Police spend time patrolling Somerset to help deter criminal activity. As a result, although the Village Police increased their time spent in Somerset during May, they issued only one traffic citation in Town. For reasons that only the criminals can answer, we had no more burglaries in May.

As this Journal is going to print, we have not received from the Village Police cumulative statistics for the program through the end of June. In light of this -- and contrary to the suggestion in the agenda item published in this month's Town Journal -- it is unlikely that there will be any action taken regarding the Chevy Chase Village program at the July Town Meeting. Rather, the pilot program will end in June, and the final results of the program will be published in the Town Journal thereafter.

As residents have pointed out at Town meetings, both traffic and security concerns have been addressed by committees in the recent past (the report of the Security Committee is on the Town website at www.townofsomerset.com/securityreport.pdf). The task force agrees that hiring police should be part of a broader security and traffic safety program, including the work of these committees.

Residents are encouraged to provide input to the Council about whether they favor continuing on a more permanent basis the Town's relationship with the Chevy Chase Village Police Department, or pursuing another alternative such as having no additional hired security, or leaving to the Mayor's discretion the hiring of some amount of additional security on an as needed basis.

Somerset Security

by Roberta Pieczenik Chair, Security Committee

There is a big difference between feeling secure and being secure. Both my professional and personal experience lead me to believe that many concerned residents in Somerset are confusing their perception of being secure (by knowing that police are around town, somewhere) with the reality of being more secure. I, for one, would take real security over perceived security any day of the week.

How do we achieve real security? By going back to basics.

The police will do a free assessment of everyone's house, and discuss the best type of locks that are needed on windows, door, back gates..... How and where to store ladders.....When to use burglar-proof acrylic (looks like glass) in a door instead of real glass..... Where to place a fake video camera (blinking red light and all—for just \$20.00)..... Whether to install motion-detector or light-sensitive perimeter lights (electricity/light is your cheapest, most effective protection.....) A few pro-active, creative ideas can go much farther in deterring crimes of opportunity than random policing.

I suggest that the Town review the conclusions of the 2003 Somerset Security Committee report, (available at <http://www.townofsomerset.com/securityreport.pdf>) based entirely on (1) resident concerns, (2) committee research into crime in surrounding neighborhoods, and (3) committee research into national "best practices." Better street lighting, signage, community observation programs---all were talked about and then disregarded when it came to implementation. These were not recommendations of a committee that started with a bias. We should work with the Montgomery County Police to ensure that we received the appropriate level of policing and response. We should also ask the police for free security assessments of public and private spaces in town.

I, for one, like police! I worked for the Police Foundation in Washington, D.C. for two years. I "rode homicide" with the district attorney's office in Brooklyn, NY. I have plenty of money to pay for police in town. But best of all, I have common sense as well as professional expertise. And both tell me that to spend the town's money foolishly, or to have residents lulled into thinking that crime will be deterred if some police are hired to patrol, is criminal in itself!

A little free help from police, creative help from knowledgeable residents, and implementation of the knowledge gained from regional and national studies will go much further in protecting our community than the short-sighted expenditure of monies for random police patrols.

Permission to Remove One Declining and Two Dead Town Trees

by Corrie Morsey

The July Town Council Agenda lists action on the recommendation of Davey Tree to remove three trees. One is a green ash, #391, in the 4803 block of Falstone Avenue. Feeding and pruning efforts have proven unsuccessful in reversing the continuing decline of the tree's health. The remaining are two dead wild cherry trees in the picnic area of Vinton Park. One is 18" in diameter and the other is 8" in diameter. Both will be removed to grade and left in the wooded area to decompose.

School Landscaping Nears Completion

by Lou Balodemas

Landscaping at the school is finally nearing completion. The south yard and the berm in front have been properly regraded and the topsoil that Pantech missed has been placed. Seed and sod will be laid soon.

You may have noticed removal of all of the initial plantings. These were undersized and/or placed without proper soil preparation. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) forced the bonding company to replace them all. The new landscaping subcontractor is providing larger size plantings that were funded by the Town and Foundation as part of the upgraded landscape plan -- the full plan will be implemented. Some of the recently planted shrubs look distressed but the contractor is confident they will recover and MCPS is allowing them to be installed. We will monitor their health and if they do not fill in during the warranty period, the contractor will replace them.

MCPS has also agreed to provide, at its expense, \$26,000 worth of deferred landscape maintenance, predominantly around the perimeter of the property. This work has been ongoing and consists of general pruning and weeding, and removal of unhealthy and invasive trees and shrubs. In some areas, the clearing was severe, but it was felt necessary to make up for many years of neglect. We expect that the school's landscape committee will evaluate the site in the fall and undertake a plan to fill in the gaps and further enhance the site.

MCPS has also extended landscape maintenance services by the installer through August 31. This will include watering and overseeding. The PTA and Foundation will establish a new scope and pick up the contract beginning September 1, in part using the Town's initial donation, which was made last year. This was the first third of a total commitment of \$25,000 over three years.

The field appears to have taken well. There is one small depressed area that will be filled and new sod laid.

Thanks to all for your continued patience through this process.

Landscaping in the Town Right-of-Way

by Corrie Morsey

Many residents have been undertaking landscaping projects, which not only beautifies their property but also greatly enhances the Town. Several of us have planted shrubs and perennials not only on our property but in the Town's right-of-way as well. (As a rule of thumb the right-of-way extends 14' or 15' from the curb.)

Please note that planting in the right-of-way is done at your risk. The Town cannot guarantee protection of plants when working on infrastructure in its right-of-way. In addition, for safety reasons residents of corner properties must be sure that plantings do not obstruct the vision of drivers.

Any trees or shrubs near a Town sidewalk must be trimmed and pruned so they are at least a foot from the sidewalk.

On My Mind

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

As we savor the success of the Town's remarkable Centennial celebration, my thoughts have turned to several "neighborhood preservation" issues that recently crossed my desk. While Somerset has grown significantly in one hundred years, in many ways it is still the lovely little hamlet our forefathers envisioned, even though now it is more of an oasis surrounded by a highly developed community. I know many of us are interested in preserving the Somerset "character" for the next century, at least.

Many of you are aware of the Town's membership in the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights and of the hard work that organization has done for many decades to ensure development to the south of us has been "measured" and that our residents have had a voice in the decision making process. Now a new group, an offshoot of the CCCFH, has begun to address changes that will take place to the west of us -- in the Westbard area where the new owner of the large shopping center wants to expand the project with a much higher density. Changes also will be taking place along River Road. Council member Rick Kessler, former Council member Virginia Mitz and I have joined the leadership of this citizens group, which plans to be active in the months and years to come, to weigh in as the County and Planning Board make major decisions that will affect traffic, air quality, availability of services, noise, etc. This organization needs input from as many individuals as possible and has developed a comprehensive questionnaire to collect it. I urge everyone to answer the questionnaire at www.westbard.org promptly. Your views are very important.

On another topic -- the Town Hall (yes, again): As the public discourse continues and we consider its future, it is clear to me, as I have said before, that restoring the building, not tearing it down, is what most people want. From the perspective of the Centennial party, it seems to me the building is a symbol of the Town's history in the past century in addition to offering an example of the worth of municipal government and our own personal values.

Recently, though, as the Council moved forward on decisions to shore up the building's foundation, there was a proposal on the table that might lead to the removal of the chimney. While the removal might seem minor to some, I am in the camp of those that feel that unnecessarily taking down the chimney might destroy the historic character of the whole structure, thereby compromising this major symbol of the Town's greatness. Let me know your views.

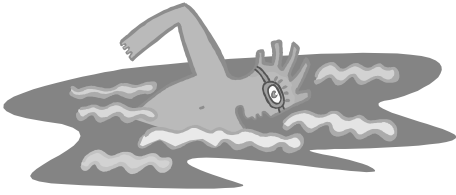
News from the Swim Team

by Sarah Morse, Team Rep

Once again, the Somerset Swim team has opened the season with record breaking swims. Swimming against top seeded Stonegate, on June 17, nine year old Gavin Springer bested John Knight's 1987 record for back stroke and Michael Young's 1998 record for fly. Super fast swimmer, Zoe Loversky, 11, also got her name on the record board in a new age category with three swim -- Girls 12 and under IM, 11-12 back and 11-12 Fly. These All-Stars swimmers were joined by two new All-Star qualifiers -- 12 year old Grace Reingruber in Breast Stroke and 8 year old free style swimmer, Rebecca Long.

With over 60 Somerset athletes competing, there were lots of impressive swims. Seeded fourth in 9-10 breast, Tommy Reingruber dropped 5 seconds to win the race. Anna Kingdom seeded last in Girls 13-14 IM, dropped 7 seconds

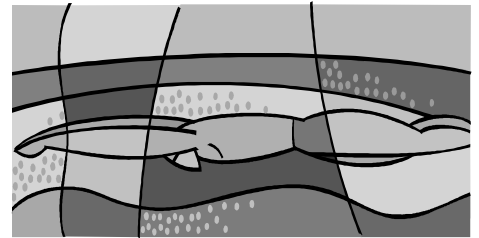
for a third place! And the Girls Open medley won their relay with seconds to spare. Personal Best were swum by almost every swimmer with some dropping as much as 11 seconds from their time trial times.



Unfortunately as fast as we were, Stonegate was faster and we lost the meet 512 to 271. Somerset swimmers won in spirit, however, with Captain Purple making his/her appearance not only at the meet (who is the masked person?) but visiting all the swimmers' homes and leaving them personalized signs to cheer them. For those who don't know who or what is "Captain Purple", he/she is the team's mystery mascot who leads the "S-O-M-E-R-S-E-T" cheer before jumping into the pool fully costumed. The identity and gender of Captain Purple is a closely guarded secret. Some say he/she isn't really even a person, but some sort of super hero sent to cheer the team on.

The developmental team started on June 19, with team teenagers ready to coach these beginning swimmers. The team is especially proud to have 22 teenagers who are willing to be trained and work with the pre-team. We haven't done a formal survey, but we like to think that we have the most trained teenage coaches in the entire swim league. All of them have gone through a three hour training session to learn how to teach swimming to beginners.

Social events have started with a win this year. Over 40 swimmers have been enjoying the daily *Breakfast with the Coaches*, the first week of morning practice. Laser tag is planned for June 29 after a rigorous guest coaching session. We have a spaghetti dinner and lock-in also in the works, as well as pep rallies and sign making.



The team continues to grow. Every year it is a "record size". If it seems like the practices are really crowded this year that's because they are. The team now has registered 155, 10 more than last year. Even with three practices times a day, this means a lot of swimmers every day in each lane. We have meets every Wednesday and Saturday until July 22, so check the calendar and come down to a home meet and cheer us on. For more team news and pictures from the meets, check out our web site www.townofsomerset/swimteam.

Somerset History column: Fun Facts about Somerset in 1906 (and a Little Later)

by Jesse Guttman, Age 11

In 1906, there was a lot of open space in Somerset, and as new houses went up improvements – and new environmental concerns -- arose. For example, in 1908, the Georgetown Gas Light Company began to lay gas lines and there were gas lights lining the street. (The only remaining one in town is at 4922 Dorset Avenue and it still works!). Also, that year the town was put into the postal guide. And it requested that trolley cars on the Rockville and Georgetown Line be marked "Somerset" instead of "West Chevy Chase." In October of that year, the first bond issue was passed -- for \$3,000 to buy stone to improve the streets and sidewalks. The stone came from the old Glen Echo Railway.



Meanwhile, by 1910, a cesspool on Dorset Avenue risked contaminating the spring that supplied water to Drummond and Somerset, so the Town asked the state for permission to build sewers. In 1911, the county health officer told all Somerset residents to stop discharging sewage into Little Falls Branch and Somerset Mayor, Dr. Crampton (see Town Journal, 4/18/06, p. 10) undertook a chemical analysis that showed the Chevy Chase "sewer farm" was polluting Little Falls Run.

Mayor Crampton planted lots of trees in Somerset, including the famous copper beeches that once stood in the protected plot at the corner of Dorset and Surrey Street where the Town just dedicated its centennial plaque. The women of Somerset met at the Wednesday Club, which requested "civic improvement and inspection" of the dairy farm on Dorset Avenue.

Thinking about how our living in Somerset impacts the environment is as important to Somersetters now as it was then.

Somerset Child Care Center Changes Name

by Penny Bell

All Saints' All Day Child Care Center (ASAD), which operates the kindergarten enrichment, pre-k and before/after school child care programs at Somerset Elementary School is changing its name to *Wonders Child Care Center*. The change coincides with the organization's 30th anniversary. The organization's by-laws, mission statement and non-profit status remain the same. More information at www.wonderschildcare.org.

County News

Touch Screen Voting System Familiarization

Practice on the touch screen voting system used in Montgomery County at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, Maryland; from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. For information call (240) 777-8200. The Primary Election is Tuesday, September 12 and the General Election is Tuesday, November 7, 2006.

Volunteer Opportunities

Juvenile Mentoring Program

Persons interested in helping children who face challenges and difficulties from being involved with the County's Juvenile Court System are invited to become volunteer mentors. To learn more go to:
http://montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/News/press/PR_details.asp?ItemID=2215

Neighborhood Events Calendar

Check out the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Neighborhood News & Events Calendar at:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/scripts/we4.0/webevent.pl?cmd=open&cal=cal22&>

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

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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
E-mail: clerk@townofsomerset.com
TTY users call Maryland Relay

Deadlines: Ads July 20, Copy July 20

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 2006 - 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of minutes of the June 1 closed, the June 5 regular and the June 20 special meetings – 7:30.
2. Discussion of financial report – 7:35.
3. Action on the following transfers for FY-06: – 7:40.

<u>Amount</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
\$3,000	CPF Contingency	CPF Tennis
\$1,000	GF Contingency	GF Misc./Engr.
4. Action authorizing payment of (1) annual dues of \$2,472.84 to Maryland Municipal League for FY-07 and (2) annual premium of \$4,970.00 to Montgomery County Self-Insurance Program – 7:45.
5. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Shelton and Rory Zuckerman, 4911 Cumberland Avenue, to add a small two-story addition behind the garage – 7:50.
6. **Action on recommendations of Davey Tree to remove three Town trees: #391, a green ash, at 4803 Falstone Avenue that continues to decline despite feeding and pruning efforts and two dead wild cherries in the picnic area at the pool – 8:10.
7. Mayor's report – 8:15.
8. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 8:25.
9. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:35.
10. **Action to extend the pilot program utilizing the services of the Chevy Chase Village police to enforce speed limit and STOP signs in Town – 8:40.
11. Action on purchase of speed indicator sign for \$3,000 – 9:00.
12. Action selecting architect for swimming pool complex improvements – 9:10.
13. Action amending Swimming Pool Rules to include \$5 weekly houseguest pass – 9:25.
14. Action to approve bid to repair Town Hall foundation – 9:35.
15. Action on Town Code amendment to increase number of copies of plans required with building permit application – 9:40.
16. Action on Town Code amendment to modify definition of Replacement Fence or Wall – 9:45.
17. Action on Town Code amendment to clarify requirement to remove certain fences as a condition of erecting new fences – 9:50.
18. Action on Town Code amendment to establish procedure for granting permission to remove trees on Town property that are less than four inches in diameter – 9:55.
19. New business – 10:00.
20. Adjournment – 10:05.

This is a preliminary agenda prepared to meet the Journal press deadline, which typically is two weeks prior to the next Town Council meeting. During this period there will likely be changes to the timing of items, and some items may be added or deleted. Please consult the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch or the Town web site for the most up-to-date agenda.

Items marked ** have related articles inside this issue of the Town Journal.