



# 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's Financial Condition and Outlook Rosy*

Despite providing \$400,000 to repair and improve the office portion of the Town Hall in the new fiscal year, my proposed Budget for FY-07 shows a surplus of over \$2 million at the end of the period, June 30, 2007. My Five-Year Plan shows a surplus of over \$3 million at the end of FY-11 after spending \$700,000 to renovate and expand or rebuild the swimming pool bathhouse in FY-08 and \$600,000 in '09 to repave all of our streets and parking lots.

Fortunately, it appears that we will not have to borrow in order to attain these results.

Summaries of the proposed Budget and Five-Year Plan are included in this *Town Journal* on pages 4 and 5. A public hearing on the Budget is scheduled for the April 3 Council meeting at 8:50 p.m. Council members will act on the Budget and property tax rate at the May 1 meeting. Copies of the complete proposed Budget and Five-Year Plan plus Highlights are available at the Town Hall.

***One hundred years ago there was no Mother's Day. The American flag had only 45 stars. And the Town of Somerset not only didn't have a flag – it didn't exist! That changed on April 5 1906 when the State of Maryland issued the Charter incorporating the community of Somerset Heights along with surrounding farms and land to become the Town of Somerset.***

### ***Tax Rate to Remain 4½ Cents***

The proposed property tax rate for all five years is the same as this year, 4½ cents per \$100 assessed valuation. Of course, a homeowner's actual tax will increase each year because of higher assessments. However, if the owner occupies the house, the maximum effective increase in assessed value for property tax purposes is 10 percent per year.

Our good fortune is largely attributable to payments from the State of a portion of Maryland income taxes paid by Town residents. The proposed Budget for next year ('07) shows revenue of \$924,000 from this source, an increase of 10 percent over this year's estimate from the State of \$840,000. Approximately three-fourths of our total income will come from this source. Year-to-year percentage changes have fluctuated wildly, but my estimated 10 percent jump annually for the next five years seems reasonable in view of increases in '04 of 12 percent; '05, 29 percent; and '06, 36 percent.

Salary increases of 5 percent for all employees except **Enrique Cabrera** are proposed for next year and 3 percent for everyone in each of the ensuing years. I am delighted to report that **Enrique** has received a well-deserved promotion from laborer to foreman and will receive a 6 percent hike in salary as of July 1.

### ***Other Highlights, General Fund***

Police. We will have spent \$12,000 by the end of June. I have not budgeted funds for future years.

Civic Affairs. This year's \$28,000 includes costs associated with the centennial celebration.

Town Hall, Garage. Operating cost will be up next year because of higher gas and electric bills and trailer rental for a temporary Town office.

Lighting. Because of decontrol, street light bills will jump from \$17,000 last year to \$21,000 this year and \$31,000 next year.

Swimming Pool. Again, much higher gas and electric rates will result in substantially greater operating costs.

### ***Other Highlights, Capital Projects Fund***

Streets, Storm Drains, Curbs, Sidewalks. \$50,000 is to replace cracked sidewalks and broken curbs that are not the responsibility of the pipeline or school contractor.

Swimming Pool. \$50,000 next year includes fees for architect and consultants to plan a major bathhouse renovation/expansion the following year.

**Tennis Courts.** Color coating will cost \$10,000 this summer.

If you would like to discuss the proposed tax rate or budget before the hearing, feel free to call or e-mail me at [mayor@townofsomerset.com](mailto:mayor@townofsomerset.com).

### ***Almost Time to Celebrate***

By the time you receive this issue of the *Town Journal*, Somerset's huge, exciting multi-faceted centennial celebration will be just a bit over a month away. Be sure to join neighbors, former residents and public officials at Founders' Park on Dorset at Surrey, Sunday April 30, at 1 p.m.

In the meantime, admire the beautiful centennial street banners, show off by using "Town of Somerset, 1906-2006" postage stamps (thanks to designer Dave Herbick (Cumberland)) and order special Town license plates for one or more of your cars. Call or stop in Town Hall to order auto tags and buy stamps. While there, you can still purchase copies of the packed-with-pictures book, *Somerset - One Hundred Years a Town* - a perfect gift for children who grew up here.

Many residents have been involved in these projects, and I want to thank them all for the work they are doing.

### ***Callahan Done Digging***

Callahan Pipeline, the WSSC contractor, has completed their basic job of replacing water and sewer mains and house connections. As this is written, they are about to finish installing new curbs, handicap ramps and driveway aprons that they have damaged. Also now, they are replacing temporary blacktop with asphalt, which should make driving a bit

less bumpy. In early April they should be off our streets and restoring the staging area on the corner of Little Falls Parkway and Dorset in Kenwood.

During late spring or summer, another contractor working for WSSC will mill and pave from curb to curb the streets where Callahan has been working. As most of you know from your detours in Town, the streets involved are all of Essex, Dorset from Little Falls to Warwick and Warwick from Cumberland to Falstone.

**If Callahan has done restoration work near you but omitted damaged infrastructure in front of your house, please notify Town Hall promptly and be as specific as you can so that we can follow up while they are still here.**

### ***One Spot Open on Elections Board***

As a result of an amendment to the Town Charter recently enacted by the Town Council, a vacancy exists in the Board of Supervisors of Elections. The amendment increased the size of the board from three to five members. At the March Council meeting, Marc Geffroy was confirmed as the fourth member.

If you would like to be considered for the fifth position, please submit a brief statement of your interest and background to the Town Hall by **Wednesday, April 12**. The term will extend from May of this year through December of next year.

Current members of the board, in addition to Marc Geffroy, are Tracy Truman, chair; Ellie Fink; and Bonnie Thomson. I'm sure that the experienced members would be glad to explain the responsibilities of the body and indicate the approximate time requirements for members to perform their jobs. A copy of the Town Charter section on the board, registration and voting is available from Tom Carter or Corrie Morsey in the Town office.

### ***Montgomery Municipal Cable Programs***

Would you like to know what's on "our" cable TV station every day? Our station is Channel 16, Montgomery Municipal Cable in Kensington, which is supported by 11 County towns and villages, including Somerset.

We have arranged with the station management to e-mail their programs daily to residents who would like to receive them. Call, e-mail or write Tom at the Town Hall if you would like to avail yourself of this service.

Are you aware of the fact that two Somerset residents conduct regular programs on Channel 16? **Lila Snow** hosts the Art Scene Monday evenings at 7. She reviews movies, books and art exhibits. **Gail Werner's** program, called Weburbs, is all about computers. She is on the tube Tuesdays at 9 p.m.

### ***Two Contractors Complete Work***

Two projects recently approved by the Council have been completed satisfactorily. You may have seen the new trail rail on the shortcut path to and from Friendship Heights. Long Fence did a fine job for less than half the price of the next-lowest bidder. Superior Home Works of Frederick, MD, shored the pool pump room ceiling promptly following Council authorization and Shemro Engineering, which designed the work, inspected and approved it.

### **Calendar**

**Monday, March 27** – MVA's mobile office in Friendship Heights

**Sunday, April 1** – Arbor Day in Somerset

**Monday, April 3** – Town Council meeting

**Wednesday, April 5** – Somerset election day

**Thursday, April 6** – Journal deadline: ads

**Friday, April 14** – Journal deadline: copy

**Tuesday, April 18** – Town Council Working Session on Facilities Renovations

**Sunday, April 23** – Swim Team Parents meeting

**Monday, April 24** – MVA's mobile office in Friendship Heights

**Sunday, April 30** – Town Centennial Celebrations

**Sunday, May 7** – Authors' Forum

**Saturday, May 20** – Swim team breakfast party & Team sign-up

### Combined Summary of General and Capital Projects Funds

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>FY05 AUDIT</b>	<b>FY06 ESTIMATE</b>	<b>FY07 BUDGET</b>	<b>FY08 PROJ.</b>	<b>FY09 PROJ.</b>	<b>FY10 PROJ.</b>	<b>FY11 PROJ.</b>
Property Tax @ .045	135,877	137,840	153,665	168,507	184,826	202,766	222,491
State Income Tax	616,787	840,295	924,325	1,016,757	1,118,433	1,230,276	1,353,304
Other	164,702	216,424	189,765	178,251	179,577	180,918	182,271
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>917,366</b>	<b>1,194,559</b>	<b>1,267,755</b>	<b>1,363,515</b>	<b>1,482,836</b>	<b>1,613,960</b>	<b>1,758,066</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>							
Personnel	204,700	222,692	252,428	260,662	269,278	278,301	287,758
Legal	33,951	25,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Other General	87,462	120,681	92,110	97,398	90,892	90,764	94,128
Streets/Sidewalks	61,575	65,500	125,080	82,054	679,118	86,277	88,535
Trees/Grnds/Parks	101,367	73,000	83,390	83,792	84,205	84,632	85,071
Sanitation/Leaves	91,363	105,300	105,500	107,195	108,897	109,135	110,895
Swimming Pool	125,386	149,000	181,320	835,260	189,317	168,497	172,802
Tennis Courts	696	1,000	11,125	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Batting Cage	1,397	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Town Hall/Garage	38,821	39,500	421,370	38,369	13,710	14,061	14,423
Major Equipment	25,192	5,000	5,000	30,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Erosion Control	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Misc./Engineer	2,502	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Undergrounding	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contingency	0	0	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>794,412</b>	<b>809,173</b>	<b>1,369,823</b>	<b>1,628,230</b>	<b>1,533,917</b>	<b>930,167</b>	<b>952,112</b>
<b>DEBT SERVICE FUND</b>							
Revenue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Payments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer from CPF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>COMBINED FUND BALANCE END OF YEAR</b>							
Beginning of Year	1,604,892	1,727,846	2,113,232	2,011,164	1,746,449	1,695,368	2,379,161
Excess of Revenue Over (Under) Expenses	122,954	385,386	-102,068	-264,715	-51,081	683,793	805,954
<b>End of Year</b>	<b>1,727,846</b>	<b>2,113,232</b>	<b>2,011,164</b>	<b>1,746,449</b>	<b>1,695,368</b>	<b>2,379,161</b>	<b>3,185,115</b>

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007 WITH AUDITED  
FIGURES FOR FY-05 AND ESTIMATES FOR FY-06**

**REVENUE**

<u>Line Item</u>	<u>FY-05 Audit</u>	<u>FY-06 Estimate</u>	<u>FY-07 Proposed</u>
Property Tax Per \$100 Assessed Value	135,877 at .05/.22	137,840 at .045/.22	153,665 at .05/.22
State Income Tax	616,787	840,295	924,325
Highway Users	52,666	57,495	67,357
<u>County Revenue Sharing</u>	<u>41,660</u>	<u>53,390</u>	<u>55,335</u>
Swimming Pool	9,303	10,000	10,000
Tennis	474	450	450
Batting Cage	220	200	150
Interest	33,157	68,020	40,200
<u>Town Hall Rental</u>	<u>8,789</u>	<u>5,500</u>	<u>0</u>
Building Permits	6,375	3,000	5,000
Cable TV Franchise	9,595	10,400	10,504
Miscellaneous	2,463	7,969	769
<u>FEMA</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>917,366</b>	<b>1,194,559</b>	<b>1,267,755</b>

**END OF YEAR FUND BALANCE**

(RESERVE, CUMULATIVE SURPLUS, RAINY DAY FUND)

	1,727,846	2,113,232	2,011,164
<u>Percent of Current Year Expense</u>	<u>217.5</u>	<u>261.2</u>	<u>146.8</u>

# Town Hall Tidbits

By Tom Carter

## Town Election April 5

Election Day for the Town of Somerset is Wednesday, April 5, for Mayor and two Council members. Nominations were received for Walter Behr for Mayor, and Jeffrey Slavin and Lesley Simmons for Council member. Voting will take place at the Town Hall on Wednesday, April 5, 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 5.

The candidates' statements may be found elsewhere in this issue of the Journal.

## 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.

FORM 502  
RESIDENT  
ON FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING 2006 ENDING 2006

MARYLAND RESIDENT  
INCOME TAX RETURN

SOCIAL SECURITY #		SPOUSE'S SOCIAL SECURITY #	
First Name	Last Name	First Name	Last Name
PREVIOUS ADDRESS (Not your home)			
City or Town	State	Zip Code	
Number of county and incorporated city, town or special taxing area in which you were employed on the last day of the last period (See instructions)		Maryland county	
		TOWN OF SOMERSET	

## Found

A set of three keys, one for a Chrysler, were found in front of 4919 Dorset Avenue in mid-March. If you think they are yours, call Tom at 301-657-3211.



## 2006 Tennis ID Cards

Tennis ID cards for 2006 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

Spring 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 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.

## MVA Mobile Office

The MVA's mobile office will be in Friendship Heights on March 27 and April 24 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.)

Trees: Donna Harman, 4719 Dorset Avenue, to remove a small dead plum and a small nuisance black walnut in her front yard.

Steve Arkin, 5520 Trent Street, to remove a large red maple with serious structural defects in his back yard.

Fences: George Shakarishvili, 5019 River Road, to build a wooden east side yard fence with gate in front.

# Legislation

At the March 6 meeting, the Town Council introduced legislation to amend the Town Code by changing portions of Section 9-107. School Zones and Traffic to make the signage and speed limit comply with standard practice and recommendations of Montgomery County Public Schools and the Department of Public Works and Transportation traffic experts.

# Council Activity

At the February 13 Work Session, the Council discussed possible repairs/improvements to the Town Hall foundation and pool bathhouse.

At the March 6 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Confirmed the Mayor's reappointment of Jeffrey Slavin and Phyllis Wiesenfelder and appointment of Lyndsey Van Vliet-Gerber for two-year terms on the Special Events Committee. (Jeffrey Slavin abstained on his reappointment.)
2. Confirmed the Mayor's appointments to the 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 terms.
3. Confirmed the Mayor's appointment of Marc Geffroy to the Board of Supervisors of Elections for a term ending December 31, 2008.
4. Received nominations from the floor for Walter Behr for Mayor and Lesley Simmons and Jeffrey Slavin for Council members. Set March 19 as the date for the candidate forum, if needed [Editor's note: No forum was needed, as no additional nominations were submitted.]
5. Approved a six-month extension of the building permit of Andrew Bartley and Jill Herscot, 4909 Cumberland Avenue, to complete construction of a two-and-a-half story house with attached garage.
6. Heard the Mayor's presentation of his Five-Year Fiscal Plan.
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 Professional Consulting Corporation to perform soil borings around the Town Hall for up to \$1,700.
9. Proclaimed April 1 as 2006 Arbor Day for the Town.
10. Agreed to another Work Session in April on a date to be determined later. [Editor's note: The date was subsequently set for April 18.]



## Candidate Statements

### For Mayor

**Walter J. Behr, 4809 Grantham Avenue**



Personal Somerset resident 49 years. Four children; all graduates of Somerset, Westland and B-CC. A.B., Oberlin College, economics. Graduate work, University Cincinnati and American University. Formerly Army Information and Education Officer, industrial relations division director with U.S. Government and area sales manager for California company.

Formerly president Somerset PTA, vice president Westland; member B-CC Citizens Advisory Board; president, Temple Sinai; co-founder and chairman of Boy Scout troop at Bethesda Christian Church.

Accomplishments as Mayor Acquired four parkland parcels, completing buffer between highrises and single-family homes. Arranged three creek erosion control projects.

Converted "Red House" into first Town Hall. Planned renovation of tennis and basketball courts and swimming pool bridge. Directed Somerset's largest public works project involving storm drains, streets, curbs sidewalks and handicap ramps. Negotiated \$1 million loan and renegotiated twice at lower interest rates.

Coordinated efforts which produced first Town Code in 60 years. Led successful effort to liberalize registration and voting process.

Supervised cleanup of debris from 1989 storm and Isabel; arranged for State and County assistance. Instituted newspaper and mixed paper recycling years before County. Beefed up street lights in intensity and number and arranged for lights and rail on bathhouse trail.

Expectations I pledge to keep serving as a hands-on Mayor, working closely with Tom Carter, our very capable Clerk-Treasurer, and quietly resolving dog, noise, tree and other problems. I promise to *listen* to residents and use my best judgment in making recommendations to the Town Council, knowing that all parties will not be pleased all of the time. With the help of Council members, volunteers and staff, I will strive to keep Somerset the sought-after community it has always been.

### For Town Council

**Jeffrey Slavin, 5706 Warwick Place**



Serving on the Council for the past four years has been a rewarding experience, and I have come to truly appreciate the value of municipal government. We are fortunate to have the ability to make so many decisions at the local level.

When I first ran for office, I promised to work on improving communications, and to enhance our sense of community. Through my regular articles and columns (especially "All About People") in the Journal, responses to daily calls and letters from many of you, and attendance at every Town Council session and the vast majority of committee meetings, I feel I am doing my share to improve communications. My involvement in the Town's community service days and corps, along with organizing the "brown bag" lunches and support for important Town institutions like the Elementary School, swim team, sledding hill and Norwood Park have helped to bring us all together.



If re-elected, I will continue to represent all voices in Somerset and take positions to reflect the plurality view in Town. Everyone here is a stakeholder whose positions need to be listened to and respected. We have challenges ahead as we make major decisions on our Town Hall, Pool House, stream erosion, streets, security and development. And I want to involve more residents in the budgeting process for the Town, which impacts every one of these issues.

Voting is an important duty. I would appreciate your support so I can work on your behalf for the next two years.

### **Lesley Simmons, 4723 Cumberland Avenue**



It has been a privilege to serve on Somerset's Town Council for the past two years and I have been bowled over by your many calls and e-mails asking that I run again.

My work with the Town has included editing the Town Journal and Chairing the History Committee (I authored the recently published, *Somerset: One Hundred Years a Town*). I am on the Police Task Force and have worked to balance our police presence with an educational campaign on traffic safety. I have studied the often difficult and controversial issues that have come up before the Council taking into consideration expert opinion as well as residents' views before taking my position. While not everyone has been pleased with all of my positions, many of you have told me that the diligence and seriousness with which I have arrived at them are valued.

I attended MML's Conventions and earned a Fellowship in the University of Maryland's Academy for Excellence in Local Governance.

I am committed to retaining the strong community spirit that is Somerset as well as ensuring that our valuable facilities -- the Town Hall and pool house -- are renovated and maintained in a way that meets our community needs -- and in a timely manner. Please come out and vote on April 5<sup>th</sup>!

## **Town Hall and Pool House Update**

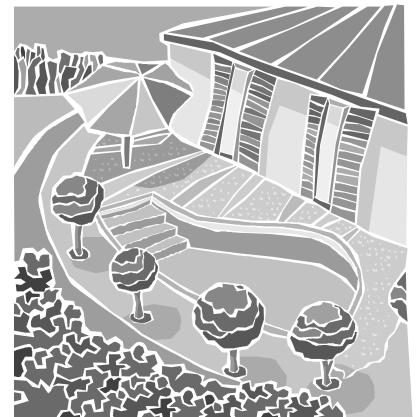
by Tom Eldridge and Rick Kessler

The Town Council has been working for a number of years to collect data on possible facilities renovations. We established a committee to study possible renovations to the Town Hall. We established a committee to survey residents on possible pool house improvements.

On the Town Hall, the Council has been discussing a proposal by Bill Brenner -- Town resident, architect, and former member of the Town Hall Renovation Committee -- that involves either a one or two-phase renovation. If accomplished in two phases, the first phase would involve renovating the front portion of the Town Hall, the original 100-year old structure, to make it energy efficient, improve the use of the interior space, and make the second floor useable. The second phase would involve replacing the current meeting hall with a meeting space on the same level as the front portion of the building -- making it handicapped accessible.

Regardless of the extent of the renovation the Town ultimately decides to pursue, we will need to repair and improve the building's foundation. The Council is currently soliciting bids from contractors to repair the foundation on the old portion of the Town Hall.

The Council also has hired an engineer to more closely examine the feasibility of possible improvements to the pool area. Much of the pool facility sits in a flood plain, and that creates regulatory hoops we would have to pass through for any possible renovation. We have not yet received this expert's report. The Pool Committee has compiled a



comprehensive list of possible changes to the pool and is now working on presenting to the Council a more specific set of options. Some possible options are:

**Option One:**

Do nothing.

**Option Two:**

Renovate the pool facility substantially along the lines of its current footprint without major changes to the external form of the building. These renovations would alter the size and appearance of the bath/changing rooms and provide additional office and storage space.

**Option Three:**

Renovate according to Option Two but add an additional multipurpose space to the building on to the structure either as second floor or as attachments to the ground floor facility. This additional space could be designed for all year usage.

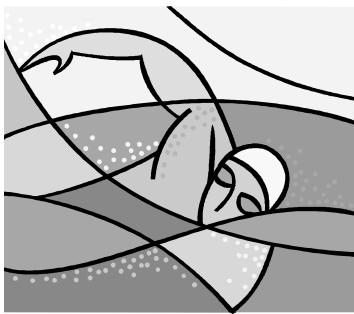
**Option Four:**

Replace the entire structure with a new building designed for all year usage that could be used as a year-round community center with administrative oversight and such amenities as an indoor pool, exercise room, library and meeting hall.

There will be a Town Council Working Session on Tuesday, April 18, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall for Council members to further discuss these issues. Residents are welcome, and encouraged to attend.

## Swim Team Parents Meeting Set for April 23

by Sarah Morse



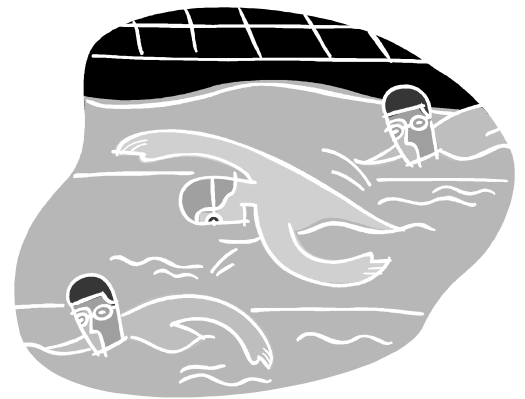
It may seem like summer will never come, but rest assured that planning for the Somerset Dolphins swim team is already going strong. All winter long we have been working hard to ensure the best summer yet. We have hired -- well, re-hired -- coaches; we have scheduled B-meets. Now we need your input at the annual spring parent's meeting, which will be on Sunday April 23, at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

We are always looking for people to take over jobs -- water boy, officials, organizers for welcome back party, concession providers are just a few, off the top of my head. Come to the meeting prepared to volunteer!

The next important date is Saturday, May 20, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. -- the big party to welcome back swimmers and collect team dues. The pool will open the weekend before Memorial Day again this year, so we get to have a party right before the pool opens! More on this later, but mark your calendars for this ever-popular event.

The first swim meet is Saturday, June 17 and the second is on Wednesday, June 21. We swim almost every Saturday and Wednesday until July 22 (the end of the dual meet season) when we have our annual banquet. All-star events are the last week-end in July.

Finally, for those of you who don't know that Somerset has a swim team open to all swimmers ages 4 to 18, here is your invitation to find out all about it. Please feel free to call Sarah Morse, Team Rep at (301) 907-3298 to learn about Somerset's only Town-sponsored sport.



## Kindergarten Orientation at Somerset ES

by Laura Ginns

If you have a child who will be turning 5 by September 1, 2006 please call the Somerset Elementary School office at (301) 657-4985 to get your name on the list of incoming Kindergartners. Somerset is anticipating a full day kindergarten program this fall. If you are considering retaining your child in preschool or are enrolling for private school, but have not yet made a final decision, it is important to place your child's name on the orientation list.

The school will hold an orientation session on Wednesday, May 3 by appointment. Information and registration materials will be mailed the second week of April.

## Somerset's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Egg Hunt scheduled for April 30th

by Sarah Morse



Because the Town is holding a big Centennial bash this spring (invitation included with this month's Journal mailing) we have decided to piggy back the annual Egg Hunt (which was so popular last year) on to it. That means we will not do the pot luck that we did last year – ice cream is included in the centennial festivities. Next year we will go back to the Egg Hunt/Pot Luck formula.

Generations of Somerset kids have related fond memories of spring-time and taking the trolley car to the White House for the annual Easter Egg Roll or carrying their baskets to search the fields that surrounded Somerset for eggs hidden by their parents. In 2006 we will carry on that tradition looking for eggs containing candy and prizes around the Town Hall grounds in the park named for our longest-serving Town Clerk-Treasurer, James Capello. The Egg Hunt will begin at 3:00 p.m. (giving hunters time to get from the Centennial ceremony site and ice cream social at Founders' Park after the conclusion of the formal ceremony). We hope to see you there.

## Somerset's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Authors' Forum Set for May 7

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

In response to many requests, the Special Events Committee has scheduled the Town's first Author's Forum to promote our writers and their latest works. The inaugural event is set for Sunday, May 7 at 4 p.m. at the Town Hall.

We will have a reception for about half an hour and then each writer will talk about their book, read a selection and answer questions. So far the participants will include Frank Joseph and his new story "To Love Mercy", Ellen Butts's new work on Fidel Castro and Maury Atkin's memoir "Life's Voyage: Dedicated to Making a Difference." Anyone else interested in participating is welcome. Please get in touch with me.

At the end of the program books will be available to be signed.

# Residents Letters

### From Carolyn Bastian (Warwick)

Before we fantasize about Somerset fitness and recreation facilities let us work up a budget and consider management of such a facility.

- Equipment: i.e. treadmills for exercise room
- Reading room: chairs, tables, lamps
- Additional cost of utilities: electricity, gas and their increasing cost per year
- Additional insurance and liability costs
- A manager: care and maintenance, rules enforcement

All these, and possibly more, to be financed by Town taxes – no special assessments.

Summer time school is out and activities are planned by the pool committee for socializing. Come fall our lives become more structure with school and its activities and return to the demands of the workplace. One option, bridge/bingo at the Town Hall.

### From Frank Joseph (Warwick Place)

It's nice that copies of The Gazette now are available on a rack at the Town Hall (Town Journal February, p. 4). But what about those un-requested Gazettes that land on our driveways each Wednesday afternoon? Those Gazettes are like an ad screaming, "Hey! Look! No one home!" It's not easy to suspend Gazette delivery. I know: I've tried. So here's a modest proposal to the Town: Arrange a mechanism whereby Somerset residents can easily stop the Gazette while we're away, or for any other reason. In this town of busy people and frequent travelers, it would be much appreciated.

**Editors' Note:** As a result of Frank's letter we contacted the Gazette distribution manager who says they have improved their delivery service, including stops. She suggests two alternatives: (i) for those who travel infrequently call (301) 670-7350 to cancel the Gazette while you are away; call again when you return to have delivery reinstated. If you travel frequently and find it annoying to remember to stop and start the paper, you can call the same number and have a permanent "stop delivery" placed on your address. When you are in town and want to read the Gazette you can always pick one up at the Town Hall.

Often, when I have had to go out of Town on a weekend without time to cancel my newspaper someone has taken the papers off of the street and put them on my front porch. I have asked my neighbors, but no one knows who this good Samaritan is. I would like to publicly thank him or her now and also to suggest that we all keep an eye out for our neighbors and if we see newspapers or packages left for more than a day, move them to a spot out of sight and out of the weather for our absent neighbors.

## An Evening of Art to Benefit Engineers Without Borders April 8th and 9th

by Deborah Goodings



Join us at the Leland Center in Bethesda on Saturday, April 8 to enjoy an evening of art, music, and hors d'oeuvres, and to support Engineers Without Borders. The local chapter is raising funds through the sale of art to build three clean water and sanitation projects in needy communities in Ecuador, Brazil, and Thailand.

Support the organization's projects through the silent auction purchase of art from local established and student artists. Learn more about Engineers Without Borders' work through a photographic sub-exhibit. Seventy-five percent of art sale prices are 501(c)(3) tax-deductible, while the remaining 25 percent goes to the local artist.

The exhibit will open at the Leland Center at 4301 Willow Lane in Bethesda on Saturday, April 8th 5-8 p.m. for a silent auction. Stop by on Sunday, April 9th between 1:00 - 4:00 p.m to close the silent auction and pick up your art. More information at <http://www.eng.umd.edu/ewb/artauction.html>

Art donations are still being accepted through March 28<sup>th</sup>. E-mail [EWBArtAuction@xiah.com](mailto:EWBArtAuction@xiah.com), or call Deborah Goodings at (301) 656-5929.

## Cub Scout Reminder

from Mark Oxley (Dorset)

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) starting September 2006. Get a preview of some of the fun activities at the following Pack events:

- Saturday, April 22, 10:00 a.m. Join our spring conservation project to cleanup the woods and stream surrounding the Somerset pool. Wear gloves, boots, and 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. Cheer on the Raingutter Regatta Scouts as they race custom made balsa wood boats at the Somerset Town Hall. Pizza or hot dogs will be available for sale.

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

## On My Mind

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin

A recent article in the Gazette about the rules of *ex parte* communications involving a Rockville Council Member and a constituent brought our attention to the complexities of these important rules.

An article by Kevin Best for the Maryland Municipal League describes that this common law concept prohibits decision makers from having communications regarding the merits of a contested matter with only one party when the other party or parties are not present.

One example of this rule may be that when a Somerset resident makes an application for a building permit, Council members may not communicate with the applicant -- or other residents. The rule only applies when the Council is considering quasi-judicial decisions such as a building permit, not other Town business, which may be discussed with individual residents.

In the past, I believe that some members of the Council may have inadvertently violated this rule in trying to do the best job possible in ruling on building applications. Now that we know more about the *ex parte* communications rule we must be careful not to violate them. The Mayor and I are checking with experts on this matter to discover what we can and cannot do.

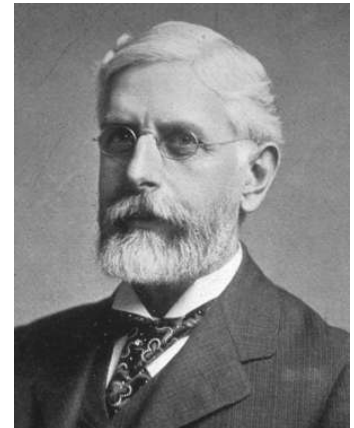
If the ultimate result is that we cannot talk to applicants or neighbors about pending building permits, I hope that our residents will understand the importance of complying with the rule.

## Town Founder Dr. Daniel Salmon

by Jesse Guttman (Dorset) Age 10

One of the first five houses built in Somerset is on Dorset Avenue and is listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. It was the summer home of one of Somerset's most famous residents who was also one of the Town's founders, Dr. Daniel Elmer Salmon. He built his house at 4728 Dorset Avenue and called it, "Clover Crest."

Daniel Salmon achieved a lot in his life starting with being the first person to receive a doctorate in veterinary medicine from Cornell University in 1876. In 1884, Dr. Salmon became the first head of the Bureau of Animal Industry at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He started the National Veterinary College in Washington in 1892 which is now George Washington University. His team of scientists eradicated a serious lung disease in cows caused by a "cattle tick" in 1897. Dr. Salmon also began the country's first national meat inspection program, but left the Department of Agriculture following the meat packing controversy created by Upton Sinclair's novel, *The Jungle*. He is best known for his discovery of the bacteria that causes food poisoning and it was named after him – salmonella!



## Looking Back

### Random Reminiscences of My Early Years in Somerset

by Barbara Park Wales

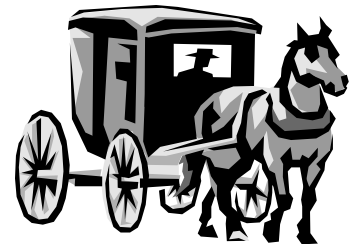


I lived at 422 (now 4822) Dorset Avenue. The house at 423 Dorset Avenue (now 4823) was directly across the street from my parents' home and was known as "The Bee Place". The house was not used as a residence, but contained some office space and laboratories where a few employees of the Department of Agriculture (I think) were conducting research with honey bees. The adjacent lot, to the west, had many beehives. The bees used to visit my mother's flower gardens, and as a result, I sustained quite a few bee stings as a young child. About 1935 the bee people moved out and the house was reconverted to a residence. It was rented for about a year to the Baker family, and then purchased about 1936 by the Aiken family.

The house on Essex Avenue directly behind my parents' home was occupied by a man named Mr. Hoover. With my understanding of things as a four-year-old, I thought he was the president, as I heard my parents speak of President Hoover.

The Bergdoll property was vacant land, extending along the south side of Dorset Avenue between Warwick Place and Wisconsin Avenue to Friendship Heights, and including the south side of Essex Avenue. This land was mostly wooded, and was known as "the woods". We children played there sometimes, swinging on grapevine swings and wading in the creek. There was a wild persimmon tree on the south side of Essex Avenue which provided tasty treats for us in the fall.

I recall the clip-clop of the horse-drawn milk truck which delivered milk to our home early in the morning in the early 1930s.



This piece was donated to Somerset's Centennial Scrapbook project by Barbara (Babs) Park Wales a Somerset resident from 1928 to 1951. If you would like to submit a piece to the scrapbook please contact Donna Harman at [donna.harman@nist.gov](mailto:donna.harman@nist.gov)

## High School students -- Earn Service Credit for Helping Out at the Town's Centennial Celebrations

by Katharine Kosin, Centennial Task Force member

Need community service hours? High school students may earn both SSL and CAS hours for helping out at the Town of Somerset's Centennial celebration on April 30th. We are looking for assistance from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in one-hour shifts in a number of tasks, e.g. to serve refreshments, take tickets for events, direct our-of-town guests to town parking, and provide directions to various events. This promises to be a fun, as well as rewarding afternoon. If you are willing to help, please contact Lesley Simmons, History Committee Chair to volunteer at [Lesley.simmons@earthlink.net](mailto:Lesley.simmons@earthlink.net) or by phone at (240) 497-1876. If you have questions, please free to contact me at [donjokat.kat@verison.net](mailto:donjokat.kat@verison.net)

## County News

The Chevy Chase Library offers numerous activities -- many of them geared to toddlers. A full program is posted on the Town Hall bulletin board. More information also at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library)

## All About People

by Council member Jeffrey Slavin



Happy birthday to **DAVID KATHAN** (Dorset) who turned 50 this month. He and wife **SARAH MORSE** are looking forward to daughter **ABBY**'s performance on Saturday, April 29 in Oliver Herring's fascinating day long project "Task" at the Hirshhorn. Herring will bring together a "micro-society" of people from our region and encourage them to make art together in a highly visible public setting. Abby was selected as one of the 60 participants out of 700 applications. The performance is free and you can get more details on the gallery's website. Son **TOBY** finished his Eagle Scout trail maintenance project in one of our Town parks, replacing some steps and putting boardwalk over some muddy parks. Many of us will benefit...

Everyone knows by now about **MARK BERRY** (Essex), son of **JAMES BERRY** and **HALI EDISON**, who received mucho publicity in the Post and Gazette and on television for his heroic efforts to save a classmate from drowning while on a school trip in Florida. Mark sets a wonderful example for all, especially to those in his generation. He made all of us proud ...And another newsmaker is businesswoman **CATHY BERNARD** (Greystone) who was selected as one of Maryland's Top 100 Women in the prestigious annual contest sponsored by The Daily Record. The winners are successful female professionals who give back by mentoring others and working in their communities. The list is impressive and includes elected officials, lawyers, doctors and non-profit leaders. Thanks to **GAYLEY KNIGHT** (Cumberland), also the recipient of numerous awards, for the nomination...Artist **LOIS LEVITAN** (Falstone) reports that one of her sculptures was accepted into the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Strathmore Artist Membership Juried Exhibition, which is currently being held at the Mansion at Strathmore through April 8. Over 200 works in various media were submitted and less than 100 were selected. Go, Lois! And everyone should hop on the Metro and get out and see the show...



Another artist of note, **CAROL A. JASON** (Warwick) is participating in an exhibition "Living Out Loud", April 12 to May 7 at the Touchstone Gallery, 406 7<sup>th</sup> Street in the hot Gallery Place neighborhood. Opening reception is Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> from 6-8:30 p.m. ([www.TouchstoneGallery.com](http://www.TouchstoneGallery.com)). An additional short ride on Metro not to miss...A new job is in store for **SAM LEIKEN** (Greystone) who has accepted a position as Senior Policy Director at the Council on Competitiveness. The Council was created twenty years ago by industrial, university and labor leaders to provide a forum for elevating national competitiveness to the forefront of our national consciousness...**HERB** and **JANE BELLER** (Dorset) recently celebrated the birth of second grandson

**NATE HENRY BEERMAN**. Nate lives in Deerfield, Illinois with his mom **ANGUE BELLER BEERMAN**, dad **MARC** and 2 year old brother **MAX**. Angie runs a unique baby gift business which you should check out at [www.madebyangie.com](http://www.madebyangie.com). Sister **LINDSAY BELLER** also lives in the Chicago area and is Editor of the Lake Forest College alumni magazine...



Musician **HILDA SEIBEL** (Uppingham) will be performing at lunchtime at the Friendship Heights Village Center on Friday, April 21—call (301) 656-2797—and we will also enjoy a performance from her at the Town's centennial celebration on April 30...Pick up the latest edition of Capital File magazine for complete information on **ALICE ROGOFF RUBENSTEIN**'s restoration of the remarkable log cabin on Cumberland Avenue. Alice traveled to Alaska in 2001 with a friend and their sons and became enchanted with the artistry in the state. Along with others, she then formed the Alaska Native Arts Foundation ([www.alaskanativearts.org](http://www.alaskanativearts.org)), a nonprofit marketing organization which sells museum quality art over the internet and at selected stores. In order to showcase

her own growing collection, Alice last year purchased and restored the cabin, a special place for her art and a retreat for friends and visitors from Alaska. The house was originally built as a carriage house for a family's larger log home, but it

was never actually used as such. It has survived the threat of modernization through its years of ownership by two families dedicated to preserving its integrity and original condition. Kudos to Alice for doing all this and hopefully all those interested will get to see what she has done during the course of the year...Mark your calendars for the PBS reality show "Texas Ranch Hand" – now scheduled for four nights May 1 through 4 from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Remember, this is the show co-starring **MAURA FINKELSTEIN**, daughter of **ESTHER and NAT** (Surrey) and we are all anxiously awaiting its debut. While you are at it, make sure April 30 is red starred as that is the day for the Town's Centennial celebrations and it's an absolute must. Happy Easter, Passover, spring and start of the baseball season to all



The Town Journal is the official publication of the Town of Somerset, Montgomery County, MD.  
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#### **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 April 6, Copy April 14**



# 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.

## WANTED

METAL KITCHEN CABINETS. Are you remodeling your old kitchen and need to get rid of those 1950s metal cabinets? If so, I need them and will haul them away for you! Call Cathy Davis, 301-951-7533.

## MISCELLANEOUS

MODERN DANCE CLASS offered by Cynthia Word at beginning level for adults in partnership with Montgomery County Recreation Department. Based on the Isadora Duncan technique. Eight Tuesday nights, 7-8 p.m. beginning April 18<sup>th</sup> at the Leland Community Center, 4301 Willow Lane, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. For more information call Cynthia at 301-951-8333 or 240-777-6840 to register.

SOMERSET RENTAL: end of August to December. 3 bed-rooms, 3 baths. Furnished. Call 301-907-8805.

## FOR SALE

SOMERSET HOME. 3-5 bedroom/3 bathroom, large lot, big kitchen, hardwood under new carpet, lots of storage, well-maintained systems and structure, mature landscaping, great location on Surrey Street. Starting offers at \$1,000,000. No realtors at this time please. Call Sharon, 703-451-7641.

GREAT SALE: Late 19<sup>th</sup> c. furniture: china cupboard, table, student desk and more. 19<sup>th</sup> c. French prints, paintings; kilns, outdoor chairs, etc, grill lawn equipment, flagstone and more. Nice stuff; nice prices. April 1 and 2. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Just come. Charlotte Perret, 301-986-6952.

*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.*

# PRELIMINARY AGENDA

## REGULAR MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL

*Monday, April 3, 2006 - 7:30 P.M.*

1. Approval of minutes of the March 6 regular meeting – 7:30.
2. Discussion of financial report – 7:35.
3. Announcement of \$2,095.82 emergency expenditure for repair of underground line for pool path lights cut in four places by railing contractor – 7:40.
4. Action on setting spring large item pickup by trash hauler on Friday, May 12 – 7:45.
5. Presentation of commendation certificate to Mark Berry for saving fellow student's life – 7:50.
6. \*\*Report by Bill Brenner on Town Hall foundation – 7:55.
7. Action on tree removal permit application by Jim Losey and Alex Acosta, 4700 Essex Avenue, to remove several trees – 8:10.
8. Action on tree removal permit application by Giri and Malini Jadeja, 4602 Dorset Avenue, to remove two Siberian elms and a chestnut crowding the driveway and a nuisance sweet gum in the back yard – 8:15.
9. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Philip and Barbara Levine, 5524 Uppingham Street, to reconfigure their first floor by enlarging their kitchen and garage, adding a second floor over the right side of the house, a new front porch and a deck in the rear – 8:20.
10. Fact finding hearing and action on applications by Charles and Charlotte Perret, 4716 Falstone Avenue, to demolish the existing house and shed and construct a one-story house with finished basement and attached garage and replace a portion of the fence along the south side of their driveway – 8:35.
11. \*\*Public hearing on Mayor's proposed budget and property tax rates for FY-07 – 8:50.
12. Mayor's report – 9:10.
13. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 9:20.
14. Suggestions and questions from residents – 9:30.
15. Report by Tom Eldridge on tickets issued by Chevy Chase Village police and schedule for April – 9:40.
16. Action on contract with Camelot Property Services to have streets swept for \$2,250 – 9:50.
17. Action on extension of contract with Connecting Links for managing Town Web site for monthly fee of \$375 (up from current \$325), to include monthly update and thorough review annually – 9:55.
18. Action on 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 – 10:00.
19. Introduction of Town Code amendment to increase fine for blocking sidewalk or street from \$50 to \$250 for first offense, \$500 for subsequent offenses – 10:05.
20. New business – 10:10.
21. Adjournment – 10:15.

Items marked \*\* have corresponding articles in this issue of the Town Journal

*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 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 up-to-date agenda.*