



# SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



## Mayor's Den

By Jeffrey Slavin



The campaign is now over and the hard work has begun. I want to thank the voters of Somerset for their overwhelming support and pay tribute to my worthy opponent Lesley Simmons.

Lesley has made tremendous

contributions to the Town and for that we are all grateful.

And of course, there are not enough words in the dictionary to say “thank you” to newly named *Mayor Emeritus* **Walter Behr** (the proclamation to that effect was my first official act). He has truly left a legacy in Somerset and I will do my best to live up to the standard he has set.

I congratulate newly elected Council members Cathy Pickar and Alan Proctor, who have already hit the ground running, and look forward to building a strong relationship with freshman Council Vice President Marnie Shaul so that she will be prepared to run Somerset in the times that I am absent. I will also rely on the experience of returning Council members Rick Kessler and Tom Eldridge.

Most importantly the office staff of Clerk-Treasurer Tom Carter and Corrie Morsey are already providing me with the institutional knowledge that I will need as I move my agenda forward.

On that note, I am pleased that the Council has already voted to hire a consultant to help make decisions on traffic calming, will be adding funds to the proposed budget to get the Pool House project on its way, and, led by Council member Shaul, is convening a group to assist us in the long term budget planning.

In the months and days ahead, I look forward to working with everyone in Town on public policy decisions and individual problems and concerns. Please don't hesitate to pick up the phone or send me an email. And I hope there will be a big attendance this year on July 4.

### From the Editor

Please Note: The Budget Summary will be an insert.

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## Calendar

**Saturday, May 3**

Town Stream and Invasives Cleanup

**Monday, May 5**

Town Council Meeting

**Early May**

Street Sweeping

**Tuesday, May 13**

Journal Deadline, Ads and Copy

**Tuesday, May 13, 7:00 p.m.**

Fire Alarm Testing at SES

**Wednesday, May 14**

Deadline to Register for  
Special Trash Pickup

**Friday, May 16**

Special Trash Pickup

**Saturday, May 31**

Capital Crescent Trail Celebration

**Monday, June 2**

Town Council Meeting

Check the Town Web site throughout the month for an up-to-date calendar. Go to [www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com) and click on "Town Calendar."

## Town Hall Tidbits | By Tom Carter



### Maintenance Staff Changes

After almost four years, **Angel Alba** is returning to his home in the Dominican Republic because of his wife's health. Angel has been a dedicated and hard-working employee whose enthusiasm and smile we will greatly miss. Replacing Angel is Tomas' cousin, **Jose Castillo**.

Jose has lived in the United States for over 12 years and comes highly recommended.

### Street Sweeping

**GroupCAM** will begin sweeping Town streets around the first week in May. A broadcast email will be sent notifying residents of the exact date they will start. **GroupCAM** does not set a schedule and simply comes through several times until they can finish the job. Residents are asked to park their cars in their driveways during the week of sweeping. Houses where they have not been able to clean after that week will receive notices to move their cars.

### Don't Dump, Donate Program

Montgomery County has a program to recycle usable construction materials for use in low-income housing. If you have any reusable construction materials,

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The Town of Somerset, Montgomery County, MD.  
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[www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com)

#### MAYOR

Jeffrey Z. Slavin, 5706 Warwick Place  
301-654-6767

Town Hall Telephone: 301-657-2229

[Mayor@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Mayor@townofsomerset.com)

#### MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Marnie Shaul, Council V.P.

5509 Uppingham Street  
301-912-5973

[Mshaul@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Mshaul@townofsomerset.com)

Thomas Eldridge, 5605 Warwick Place

301-656-3354

[Teldridge@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Teldridge@townofsomerset.com)

Richard Kessler, 4914 Cumberland Avenue

301-654-2699

[Rkessler@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Rkessler@townofsomerset.com)

Cathy Pickar, 4915 Dorset Avenue

301-907-4881

[Cpickar@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Cpickar@townofsomerset.com)

Alan Proctor, 4900 Cumberland Avenue

301-652-4717

[Aproctor@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Aproctor@townofsomerset.com)

#### CLERK-TREASURER

Thomas Carter

301-657-3211

[Clerk@townofsomerset.com](mailto:Clerk@townofsomerset.com)

#### TOWN HALL

Open: 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. — Monday thru Friday

301-657-3211

Fax: 301-657-2773

TTY users call Maryland Relay

*This issue edited by Gayley Knight*

you may take them to the Shady Grove side of the Transfer Station at 16101 Frederick Road in Derwood between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

## Hazardous Waste Disposal

Hazardous waste may be dropped off at Westland Middle School, 5511 Massachusetts Avenue (west of Little Falls Parkway), on Saturday, May 10, and at Silver Spring International Middle School, 313 Wayne Avenue (at Dale Drive), in Silver Spring on Saturday, June 14.

The following materials will be accepted between 10 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.: *pesticides, oil-based paint, brake fluid, fuels, herbicides, solvents, antifreeze, photographic chemicals, paint thinners, motor oil, auto batteries and household batteries.*



### PLEASE NO LATEX PAINT:

Tens-of-thousands of tax-dollars are spent each year

disposing of latex paint, which is not hazardous. In fact, latex paint can be safely dried up and put out for regular refuse collection. Simply remove the lid and place it in a safe, well-ventilated area. Cans that are one-fourth or less full will dry in a few days. For cans with greater volume, add mulch, cat litter, shredded paper, or waste paint hardener available at area hardware stores.

**For more information:** call 240-777-6410 or visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/sw-](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/sw-)

[stmpl.asp?url=/Content/DPWT/solidwaste/collection\\_services/hw/hhw/index.asp#dates.](#)

## Grasscycling

Several copies of the grasscycling video are available at the Town office for your use. The video demonstrates the benefits of leaving your grass clippings on the lawn. Please call Tom at 301-657-3211 if you would like to borrow one.

## Parking

Please refrain from parking cars opposite other residents' driveways. Drivers who park in these locations not only inconvenience their neighbors who are trying to back out onto the street, but also place their own vehicles in greater likelihood of damage.

Please report all illegally parked cars directly to the police at 301-279-8000. You do **NOT** have to give your name to file a report.

## MVA Mobile Office

There will be no MVA mobile office in Friendship Heights in May.

## Permits Granted



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

## Trees:

*Robert Israel* and *Steve Harris*, 5603 Surrey Street, to remove a badly-leaning, double-trunk dying tree close to the driveway.

## Curbs:

*Anne* and *Dean Yap*, 4805 Cumberland Avenue, to create concrete steps from Cumberland Avenue to the sidewalk.

## Fences:

*Andrew Bartley* and *Jill Herscot*, 4909 Cumberland Avenue, to erect a 4-foot-high fence in their back yard.



## Crime and Police Reports

During March, one car (locked, alarmed and in a lit carport) was stolen (Surrey). Three cars were broken into (1 on Grantham and 2 on Greystone). There was no report as to whether these cars were locked. Small items, such as change, were taken. One house (Dorset) was entered during Presidents' Day weekend. The alarm scared off the intruder.

## Police

Officer *Sherif Almiggabber* worked 6 shifts in March. During that time he issued four **STOP** sign warnings, all for town residents; three parking citations (**2 No Parking Any Time and 1 fire lane/hydrant**) to two residents and one non-resident. There were several crime prevention situations.

**Please Remember to Lock Your Car.**

# Legislation

## At the April 7 meeting, the Council:

1. Took no action on a Town Code amendment to reduce hours Warwick Lane (alley) is closed to 8:15–9:30 a.m. and 2:30–3:30 p.m. on school days.
2. Introduced legislation to amend the Town Code to add a requirement for the County Consumer Protection license number for contractors when building a new home.

# Council Activity

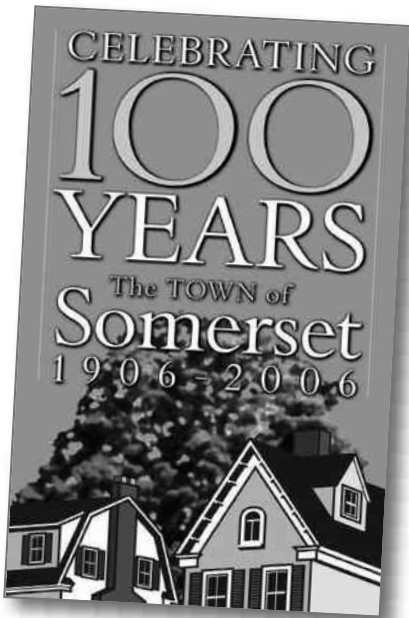
## At the March 11 special meeting, the Town Council:

The Council amended the Requirements – Pool and Requirements – Town Hall sections of the Draft Facility Design Criteria and approved the entire document as amended. (For specifics, see meeting minutes on the Town's Web site.)

## At the April 7 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Elected Marnie Shaul to a one-year term as Vice President of Council.
2. Approved the noise abatement plan for the two Bryant 165A air conditioner condenser units, the use of Eco-Stone pavers for the driveway and the location of the generator, subject to providing the model of the generator and specifics on it for Matthew Zaft and Erin Chlopak, 4820 Dorset Avenue.
3. Approved a building permit for Valerie Green and Matthew Leppe, 5519 Trent Street, to add a two-story addition to the rear of their house, subject to identification of the dumpster location, installation of a French drain or gravel pit in the back yard, receipt of a County permit and receipt of Town fees and deposit.
4. Heard a presentation by Ned Sherburne, Chief, Bethesda Fire & Rescue Squad, requesting Town support in opposition to proposed ambulance fees. Authorized the Mayor to write the County renewing Somerset's opposition to ambulance fees.
5. Heard the Mayor's presentation of the proposed budget and real and personal (business) property tax rates for FY-09.
6. Approved a contract with Ralph Schofer for \$5,900 to provide a comprehensive traffic-calming plan for the Town.
7. Postponed renewal of our contract with Connecting Links, now Mother Geek Productions, for managing the Town Web site for a monthly fee of \$375, to include monthly updates, weekly broadcast emails and a thorough review annually. Action will be reconsidered at the May meeting.
8. Renewed our agreement for Montgomery County to receive CDBG and HOME funds allocated to Somerset for low–and moderate–income residents that the Town cannot use.
9. Authorized payment of \$7,903 to C.R.H. Concrete Service for replacement of curbs, sidewalks and handicap ramps that failed after the inventory for which the Council authorized \$125,000 for replacement last August. Asked the Mayor and building inspector to go back and look at the work with the contractor and either have the contractor fix any problems with incorrectly filled asphalt areas or take a cut in pay.

# Souvenir Centennial Banners Available to Interested Residents



By Lesley Simmons, Chair, History Committee

You may have noticed the Centennial Banners have been taken down from their posts. While they have faded a little and become grubby over the two years they have decorated our Town (some mild detergent will probably fix this) we believe some residents may still be interested in having them as a souvenir.

Twenty-two 18" x 36" banners are available. Please send an email to the Town Clerk [clerk@townofsomerset.com](mailto:clerk@townofsomerset.com) by Wednesday, May 14, if you would be interested in purchasing one. If there are 22 or less residents interested, we will

make them available at a small cost. If there are more than 22 interested residents, we will hold an auction.

## Special Trash Pickup

### Friday, May 16

A special trash pickup is scheduled for **Friday, May 16**, for residents who have large items that cannot go in the *regular trash collections*. The Town now provides this service twice a year at no cost to residents. Residents wishing to participate need only notify Tom at Town Hall no later than May 14. This will be your reservation for the special collection service by our contractor, **J&J Inc.** **ITEMS WILL NOT BE PICKED UP WITHOUT A RESERVATION.**

Special trash should not be placed at the curb earlier than the night before the pickup. Special trash is defined as refrigerators, washing machines, dryers, freezers, stoves, hot water heaters, other major appliances; furniture or parts thereof; computers, large toys, bicycles, swing sets (broken down into smaller parts); bathtubs, sinks and toilets; and iron pipe, gutters/down spouts and fence pieces under six feet long. If items are in bundles, they must be light enough for two men to carry.

Lawn mowers and other power equipment must be emptied of gas and oil. Refrigerators and freezers must have the Freon removed by an authorized agent and tagged appropriately. Propane tanks must be removed from grills.

Items that will not be picked up include: parts of junked cars,



boats or trailers (including batteries and tires); loose glass; firewood, tree stumps, tree limbs or lumber; bricks and concrete blocks; paint cans; flammable or hazardous liquids or solids (including propane canisters); ammunition or explosives; large rocks; and dead animals.

## Stream Restoration Complete

By Mayor Emeritus Walter J. Behr

Restoration of Little Falls Branch downstream from the swimming pool bridge has been completed with the installation of 77 plants, spraying of a mulch compost solution and addition of bundle branches to protect the new trees.

Most of the new horticulture consists of trees – 21 ironwoods, 20 red maples, 17 sycamores and 7 river birches. In addition, 12 Christmas ferns have been planted.

The entire project was planned by the County at our request, implemented by **Highway and Safety Services, Inc.** and paid for by **FEMA.**

## Obituary

**Joanne Peterson Robinson (76)** on March 26, 2008, of Bethesda, Maryland, a resident of Washington, D.C. area since 1980 and of Somerset until 2006, life counselor and instructor, and active volunteer at Washington National Cathedral. She graduated from Northwestern University's School of Journalism. In lieu of services, condolences can be sent to National Organization for Rare Disorders, Danbury, CT.

# Committee Reports

## Join Town Residents in Cleaning Up Our Creek and Parkland

By Corrie Morsey, Parks and Natural Resource Chair

Spring means warmer weather, sunny days and . . . invasive species! The Town's Environment and Parks and Natural Resources Committees urge you to volunteer for a combination stream cleanup/invasive species removal on Saturday, May 3, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Around the streambed we will try to eradicate aggressive invasives such as English Ivy and Honeysuckle (yes, they sound sophisticated, but they are relentless and kill trees and other plants). We will be picking up accumulated trash along the stream. Details are contained in the inserted flier in this Journal. Please join us in this worthwhile endeavor!

## Calling all New, Returning and Developmental Swimmers!

By Sarah Morse, Swim Team MCSL Representative

Somerset's swim team "**The Dolphins**" starts the season with a Pizza Party and team sign-up Friday, May 23 at 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to meet the coaches, ask questions, sign-up for the team and buy uniforms. Our heated pool is opened only for the swim team, so anyone who is interested in joining the team is encouraged to attend.

**Pizza Parties, uniforms, coaches. . .** You may be wondering just what is



the Somerset Swim Team. The Somerset Dolphins are a member of the Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL). The team has practices Monday through Friday in the morning (after school is finished for the year) and in the afternoon (from 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.). There are meets every Saturday morning from June 14 to July 19. We also have four Wednesday night meets and one big relay carnival and weekly social events like spaghetti dinner, laser tag and the ever-popular breakfast with the coaches! At the end of the season, we have a banquet with trophies, skits and swimming.

## Who May join?

There are no try-outs for the team. All children, ages 6 to 18, who live in the town and can pass the deep-water test, may join. The emphasis is on having fun and developing each swimmer. We want this to be a fun community activity, not an elite group of really fast swimmers.

It is not necessary for every swimmer to come to practice every day and participate in all the meets. The team is a huge time commitment and some kids can't go to everything. There are several practices during the day, so that kids can work them into their schedule.

## Developmental Swimmers – the Minis

For children who cannot pass the deep-water test, there is a developmental team, the Minis. Mini swimmers must be between 5 and 9 years old and able to swim 15 yards. They practice 3 days a week. There is also one mini meet. Mini swimmers are an important part of the swim team and should attend all the social events. They get a trophy at the end of season.

*The swim team is the best neighborhood activity for children in town. Because it takes 36 parents to run a meet, it provides a wonderful opportunity for children and adults to meet their neighbors. Weekly social events help strengthen community ties and integrate the children into the neighborhood. We invite everyone to check it out. Any questions? Please call Sarah Morse 301-907-3298 if you can't make the pizza party Friday, May 23.*

## Somerset Dolphins - Save these Dates!

- Friday, May 23:** Preseason Pizza party and registration, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 29:** Practice Starts. Ages 11 and up: 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.; ages 10 and younger: 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, June 7:** Time Trials, 8:00 a.m.
- Thursday, June 12:** Morning practice begins – All ages: 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
- Saturday, June 14:** First Saturday Meet
- Monday, June 16:** Minis (developmental team) start: 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; 4:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 18:** First Wednesday Night meet

*Check the calendar at the pool or on the team Web site, [townofsomerset/swimteam](http://townofsomerset/swimteam) for the complete list of swim season events.*

# Community News

## Celebrate the Capital Crescent Trail

Saturday, May 31

Anyone who has ever jogged, walked, biked or pushed a baby stroller along the Capital Crescent Trail is invited to a special event on Saturday, May 31 to celebrate the Trail and learn how proposals for light rail between Bethesda and Silver Spring could change this treasured resource. Family-friendly activities begin at Elm Street Park (one block east of Wisconsin Avenue, between Elm and Willow Lane) and continue along the Trail east of the Wisconsin Avenue tunnel, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

More than a dozen local communities whose residents use the Trail, including Somerset, are organizing this opportunity. Volunteers of all ages interested in helping on May 31 should contact Council member Marnie Shaul at [mshaul@townofsomerset.com](mailto:mshaul@townofsomerset.com) by Friday, May 12.

## From Somerset Elementary School School to Test Fire Alarm

The fire alarm at school will be tested on May 13 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

## Residents' Letters



### To the Editor

### Optimistic About Somerset's Future

My congratulations to Mayor **Jeffrey Slavin**, Council members **Cathy Pickar** and **Alan Proctor** and Vice President of the Council **Marnie Shaul** on their election victories. I thank them, as well as Council members **Rick Kessler** and **Tom Eldridge**, for serving and wish them well as they move ahead to implement improvements in the swimming pool complex and Town Hall.

How fortunate we are that Town leaders over a century ago prevailed upon the General Assembly to grant a charter to our "trolley community," giving it the status of a municipality, including broad powers to regulate itself and the ability to raise funds for improvements.

How fortunate I am to have been an elected leader of Somerset for 38 years, 28-plus as Mayor preceded by eight-plus as Council member. With the help of the Council and staff and support of residents, much has been accomplished during that time, but I would like you to know what I believe to be our No. 1 achievement, which was initiated by Mayor Warren Vinton half a century ago.

I am referring to our 20 acres of parkland, which – except for Founders Park at Dorset and Surrey – protects us from the sound and sight of Wisconsin Avenue traffic and envelops Little Falls Branch as it winds through Somerset in a generally southwest direction. An urban forest in the middle of an intensively developed area is not only a haven for nature lovers and dog walkers and an idyllic setting for our swimming pool, but also a permanent buffer against the spread of the intense development in Friendship Heights.

Obviously, I have enjoyed serving Somerset all these years, and I thank those of you who, with your votes, afforded me the opportunity. I am especially grateful to those of you who have expressed your appreciation for my efforts.

To the new Mayor and Council I say thank you for serving this great town. I have no doubt we will continue to thrive under your leadership. Please call on me if I can help.

**Walter Behr**

Grantham Avenue



## Somerset Helping Hand

**NEED** a ride to the doctor? **WANT** some milk or eggs from the market and can't get there?

**COULD DO** with a ride to Metro or a friend's house? **GIVE** us a holler. Call **Zola Schneider** 301-654-7481 or **Barbara Zueghauser** 301-951-8560 and we will get a **SOMERSET HELPING HAND** from our list of neighborly volunteers.

### **Maury Atkin writes:**

Last Sunday, April 6, 2008, I needed a ride to Suburban Hospital Emergency room. I was told to call 911. But I did not want an ambulance rushing down Uppingham Street. Flora could not take me as she is still recovering from total knee surgery and is not yet ready to drive. Instead I called **HELPING HAND**. Ten minutes later Zola Schneider had me safely at Suburban. After a battery of tests, the medics at Suburban said, "No heart attack." I am fine. I am grateful to Somerset's **HELPING HAND** program, and to Suburban's rapid response to my situation.

# Preliminary Agenda

## Regular Meeting of Town Council at Somerset Elementary School

Monday, May 5, 2008 – 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of the April 7 regular meeting – 7:30 p.m.
2. Discussion of financial report – 7:35 p.m.
3. Agreement on special responsibilities of Council members – 7:40 p.m.
4. Designation of Jeffrey Slavin as replacement for Walter Behr as Town's resident agent for service of process – 7:45 p.m.
5. Action on recommendation to County Executive for appointment of Bill Farley to Friendship Heights Transportation Management District Advisory Committee, replacing Jeffrey Slavin – 7:50 p.m.
6. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Marc Reshefsky, 4705 Falstone Avenue, to add a partial second story on the center of the house and a one-story addition to the back side of the house – 7:55 p.m.
7. Action on application by Mark Klapow, 4707 Cumberland Avenue, to remove three dead trees – 8:10 p.m.
8. Recommendation to Historic Preservation Commission and fact finding hearing and action on application by Steve and Birdie Pieczenik, 4731 Essex Avenue, to reduce the size of proposed construction previously approved by Council – 8:15 p.m.
9. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Mark Traver, 5527 Warwick Place, to construct a raised deck at the rear of his house – 8:25 p.m.
10. Mayor's report – 8:30 p.m.
11. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 8:35 p.m.
12. Suggestions and questions from residents – 8:45 p.m.
13. Action on ordinance adopting budget and real and personal (business) property tax rates for Fiscal Year 2009 – 8:55 p.m.
14. Action on management contract for FY09 for maintenance of Town Web site – 9:15 p.m.
15. Action on Town Code amendment to require invisible fences for pet containment to be installed at least three feet from Town sidewalks and 14 feet from curbs and increase penalties for violation of animal control requirements – 9:25 p.m.
16. Action on Town Code amendment to add requirement for County Consumer Protection license number for contractors when building a new home – 9:35 p.m.
17. Introduction of Town Code amendment to restrict use of cell phones while driving in Somerset – 9:40 p.m.
18. Action on one-season agreement between the Town and Camp Summerset for 2008 – 9:45 p.m.
19. New business – 9:50 p.m.
20. Adjournment – 9:55 p.m.

*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.*

*Residents who wish to be present for a particular agenda item are advised to arrive 15 minutes ahead of the item's scheduled discussion time as discussion sometimes run ahead of schedule.*

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