



SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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Mayor Emeritus Walter Behr Feted by Family, Friends, Neighbors, and Dignitaries



Walter, enjoying the evening.



Senator Brian Frosh, emcee for the event, is joined by Congressman Christopher Van Hollen and Mayor Jeffrey Slavin.

On Sunday June 1, more than 200 family members, friends, Somerset residents, and elected officials came together at Kenwood Country Club to celebrate Walter Behr's many years of service as a council member and Mayor of Somerset.



Town residents (left to right) Cathy Pickar, Ruth Sorenson, David Sacks, and former Somerset resident Hilda Siebel perform during the cocktail hour.

Town residents Cathy Pickar, David Sacks, and Ruth Sorenson and former Somerset resident Hilda Siebel shared their wonderful musical talents to entertain during the cocktail hour. Guests mingled and reminisced, perused personal letters of gratitude to Walter, and looked at photos of historical moments throughout his service to the town.

After dinner, Senator Brian Frosh emceed a program filled with stories and accolades covering the many contributions Walter has

made to Somerset and the larger community: *as a strong leader, a dedicated neighbor, and a good friend.*

The entire delegation of Maryland's 16th District attended the event and presented Walter with a special citation. Walter also accepted honors and awards from Congressman Chris Van Hollen, Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett's office, and the town of Gaithersburg.

Zola Schneider shared her appreciation for Walter's determination as PTA President and Council member, working to bridge the racial and



Council member Rick Kessler presents Walter with a Somerset Centennial banner.

Calendar

Friday, July 4
Town Hall Office Closed
July 4 Celebration at Town Hall

Monday, July 7
Town Council Meeting

Friday, July 11
Journal Deadline, Ads and Copy

Tuesday, July 15
Town Hall and Grounds Use

Friday, July 18
Brown Bag Lunch

Monday, July 21
MVA at 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 "Town Calendar."

socio-economic gaps between Somerset and less advantaged communities in Washington, D.C. through school and swimming programs during the 1960s and 1970s. Bill Brenner told funny tales of sitting down with Walter to scrutinize housing plans, pointing out Walter's sheer attention to detail and relentless dedication to the town. Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, Councilmember Rick Kessler, and former Council member Lesley Simmons also shared stories of their work and friendship with Walter.

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On My Mind

Municipal Power

By Mayor Jeffrey Z. Slavin

Living in a municipality, we have the ability to set priorities at the local level, unlike citizens in unincorporated parts of Montgomery County. In Somerset we take pride in this power, especially with regard to public policy protecting trees and overseeing house construction and alterations.

Since becoming Mayor this spring, I have been paying particular attention to the application process in which citizens request Council action on building permits and tree removals. Although I don't get to vote on these requests except when there is a tie, it is my duty to ensure that the applications are reviewed by expert staff, affected citizens are alerted and provided information, and Council has appropriate legal advice. Recently we have been greatly assisted by Town Inspector Larry Plummer and other engineering types who have a background in water management and noise measurement. In the future, we hope to add independent opinions from an arborist. The decisions can sometimes be difficult, but having greater information maximizes our ability to apply the Code accurately.

The Council assumes a quasi-judicial role in making these decisions. As such, the applicants and affected parties must be given adequate time to state their cases. If there are multiple cases on a given night, a lot of the Council agenda is consumed by topics of limited general interest.

So, in the coming months, the Council and I will be looking at ways to use our time more efficiently and make the meetings more relevant to all present. Perhaps we will even move the building and tree applications to another night or create an intermediate entity to provide initial review and hold public hearings.

In this spirit, on this month's agenda all the building applications have been grouped together at the start of the meeting and I have moved the residents' suggestion period ahead of Council action on everything else. It is my hope that more comments will be made in advance of an item and residents will not have to wait all evening to state an opinion on their items of interest.

Everyone stay tuned because this is a work in progress.

Brown Bag Lunch Set for Friday, July 18

By Mayor Jeffrey Z. Slavin

The Council and I wish to invite Town residents of all ages to the quarterly Brown Bag Lunch on Friday, July 18 from Noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. Please

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Monday thru Friday

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TTY users call Maryland Relay

*This issue edited by Maxine Finkelstein
Deadline for Journal copy and advertisements: July 11, 2008*

Legislation

At the June 2 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Introduced a Town Code amendment regarding electronic pet containment devices.

Council Activity

At the June 2 meeting, the Town Council:

1. Heard the Mayor's report on the closed meeting of May 7.
2. Made the following fund transfers for FY-08:

Amount	From	To
\$25,000	GF Contingency	GF Tree Contract
\$ 7,000	GF Contingency	GF Misc/Engr
\$ 1,000	CPF Contingency	CPF Trees & Grounds

3. Reappointed Tom Carter as Clerk-Treasurer for FY-09 with a COLA increase of 3% and a merit payment of 10%.
4. Approved an RFP for storm water assessment in Somerset.
5. Deferred action on an RFP to repave Town streets until the July meeting.
6. Approved a building permit for 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, subject to receipt of a County permit, Town fees and deposit and that either Mark, Scott or Tony is on site when the trucks make deliveries and to add a fence no more than 1 foot from the edge of the driveway.
7. Approved a permit for Michael and Abby Nolan, 5807 Surrey Street, to relocate their air conditioning units to the front of their house to meet setback requirements, subject to a professionally developed noise abatement plan to be provided to the Council at the July meeting in compliance with the County or Town Code, whichever is lower.
8. Approved a building permit for Kevin Mills and Franny Peale, 5521 Uppingham Street, to add a front porch and extend the second floor to the rear over the kitchen, subject to receipt of the County permit and the Town fees and deposit.
9. Approved the removal of a dying Amur maple in the Town Hall back yard.
10. Agreed to place a pet waste receptacle in front of 5407 Surrey Street and remove the existing trash receptacle.
11. Approved a 2008 contract with Camp Summerset for use of the pool this summer.

Brown Bag Lunch *from page 2*

participate in our newest tradition by bringing a friend, sandwich or favorite recipe to share, and maybe even a dessert. Drinks, napkins and utensils are provided. We usually talk among ourselves the first half hour and then share our thoughts as a group. No need to RSVP, but if you have any questions call me on 301-657-2229 or email to mayor@townofsomerset.com.

Permits Granted



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

Trees:

Carrie Wofford and Colin Crowell, 4708 Essex Avenue, to remove two hemlocks that were knocked down by a neighbor's tree in a recent storm.

Carrie Wofford and Colin Crowell, 4708 Essex Avenue, to remove two hemlocks growing too close to the foundation of their house.

Tom and Jen Joseph, 5604 Surrey Street, to remove a mostly dead ash tree in their back yard.



Crime and Police Report

The Security Committee will provide the reports for June and July in the August Journal.



First and foremost, I want to thank **GAYLEY KNIGHT** (Cumberland) for being the Journal's guest editor last month. She has become a "Jill of All Trades" in Town for the last quarter century and it is most appreciated. Welcome to our new editor **MAXINE FINKELSTEIN** (Cumberland) who has a lot of experience in this role, and we are lucky she is willing to take on such an arduous task.

Mark your calendars now for the **2nd Annual Taste of Friendship Heights**, Saturday, September 20, and while you are at it make it a Somerset weekend, as the Back to School Classic is the next day on Sunday, September 21.

Kudos to **HARRY FREEMAN** (Dorset) who was an active participant on the Audit Committee for many years. Replacements on this committee are scheduled to be voted on by the Council at the next meeting, and I am still looking for folks for the Security, History, Swimming Pool and Tennis Committees.

By the time you read this, a group of us will have returned from the **Maryland Municipal League** (MML) Annual Convention in Ocean City. We will certainly bring back lots of new ideas to apply in Somerset, along with new contacts to help residents solve problems. I will be serving as the Montgomery County MML Chapter President in the upcoming year and will use this position to advance our views throughout the State. It was also nice to know that a large number of 4th graders from Somerset Elementary School entered the League's "If I Were Mayor, I would . . ." contest this year and while we did not have a finalist this year, I am keeping my fingers crossed for 2009.

I note that **SALLY SHEA** (Essex) will be the **Somerset PTA** Vice President in the upcoming school year and **ABBY NOLAN** (Surrey), **BILL FARLEY** (Grantham) and **SHERRY KHANNA** (Falstone) will be serving on the Executive Committee. With our entire Town's involvement, we will continue to build a strong relationship between the Town and the School.

Mayor Emeritus *from page 1*



U.S. Ambassador to the OECD and former Congresswoman **Connie Morella** commends Walter for his many accomplishments as Mayor of Somerset.

Walter's son Bill provided a warm and funny glimpse into life with the mayor, and his daughter, Meg drew laughs from the audience with a song that might be titled "Is Mayor Behr There?" a recollection of childhood memories answering calls from the many Somerset residents who needed to share their concerns—big and small—with Mayor Behr.

The evening's keynote address was given by U.S. Ambassador to the OECD and former Congresswoman **Connie Morella**. Not to be undone, Walter took the podium to make closing remarks and unfolded a large piece of paper, looking as if he had prepared an hour-long speech. He then jokingly announced, "Just kidding!" He thanked everyone for coming and for the last time, told his fellow Somerset residents with a smile that the night's meeting was adjourned.

Thank you, Walter.

NOTE: Thank you to the volunteers who organized the party and assisted at the dinner including Sarah Morse, Bonnie Lewin, Marnie Shaul, Alan Proctor, Gayley Knight, Barbara Marblestone, Lucy Brown, Kelly Barrett and Ann Brown.

Town Hall Tidbits | By Tom Carter, Clerk-Treasurer



Office Schedule in July

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

Somerset Quiet Hours

Don't forget Town noise limitations between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 9:00 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 Saturdays and holidays; that is, it may occur only between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Only quiet interior work that cannot be heard by neighbors may be performed on Sundays. On weekdays, it is legal to start at 7:00 a.m.

Pool Guest Passes

Reminder: checks for guest passes purchased at the pool should be made out to "Town of Somerset," not Somerset Pool.

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, 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. There is no dumping at the pool parking lot or at the end of Warwick Place.

Hazardous Waste Disposal

The next date for collection of hazardous waste will be Saturday, June 28, at the Westland Middle School at 5511 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20816) west of Little Falls Parkway).

The following materials will be accepted between 10:00 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/hazardous_waste.

MVA Mobile Office

The MVA's mobile office will be in Friendship Heights on Monday, July 21, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.





Council to Act on RFP for Pool Renovations

By Tom Eldridge, Council member

In March, the Council unanimously voted to approve draft design criteria for the pool that included renovating or replacing the bath house and adding certain amenities. Under a contract that began last September, Lou Balodemas of Balodemas Architects has now taken those Council-approved design criteria and turned them into a Request for Proposal (RFP). The preparation of this RFP, and a similar one for the Town Hall, was the last element of the Town's contract with Balodemas Architects. The purpose of the RFP is to solicit bids for the architect and engineering work necessary to renovate or replace the pool house. This RFP, which includes a history of the Town's decision making process, photos, budget estimates for the work, and a draft set of plans that would meet the criteria (but is not necessarily what the final design would look like), is posted on the Town's website for residents' review.

As I wrote about in an article in the June Town Journal, and as the Council discussed at the June Town Meeting, there is considerable merit in phasing the work on the pool and Town Hall, and doing the pool first. This allows the Town to focus on the designs on the pool, gain regulatory approval for the renovations there, which is complicated by its location in a stream valley buffer, spread costs for large capital projects over a number of years, and make sure all the work is done between September and the following May so as not to disrupt a pool season. I estimate that the soonest we could begin work on the pool is September 2010 with completion by May of 2011. To meet those deadlines and get through all the necessary mid-steps between hiring an architect and beginning construction, the schedule we have developed calls for us to have an architect under contract by September of this year. These are the reasons the Council will be voting to send out the RFP at its July meeting. At its May meeting, the council approved a budget for Fiscal Year 2009 that included authorizing funds for the architect, engineering, and legal work associated with the pool renovation project.

Follow Up Meeting on Town Hall and Grounds Use

There will be a follow-up meeting for residents to discuss usage rules for Town Hall and its grounds on Tuesday, July 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. If you would like a copy of the minutes from the March 10 meeting, please email Cathy Pickar at cpickar@townofsomerset.com.

Somerset's Obsession with CRACKS!

By Bob Bookman

What? A ONE MILLION DOLLAR budget line item is about to be passed by the Town Council to once again to rid our town of those supposedly horrendous cracks in Somerset's streets sometime next year. I can't believe it. Our streets are fine now and for at least another five years, unless we want to be known as both "Tree City USA," and, "Crack-Free City USA," which will be misconstrued by most people. I strongly believe we should put off paving our streets until there is a truly compelling need to pave. It seems we have gone down this paving street road about every three years. It

always causes great inconvenience with loud machinery noise, pollution, and detour signs. What are we becoming? Norman Rockwell's personification of the perfect village tucked away in Disneyland?

The condition of our streets has seemingly become a compulsion with some Somerset residents. I'm proud to say that I am Pro-Cracks (<http://www.Pro-Cracks.org>). I come from the streets of Brooklyn where for fun we applied colored chalk to make the cracks in our streets into some kind of amusing object—often pertaining to the human body. Believe me when I tell you that employing colored chalk with our street cracks used our imaginations and artistic talents. Contrast this with the endless hours of left-brain bickering over the cost of paving, which we don't need it in the first place.

And please don't counter my abhorrence to needless crack filling in Somerset by telling me that our cars will suffer because of a few street cracks that will only become more severe as each year ice widens these cracks only 0.217 inches.

In the opinion of the top 8 percent of academic achievers in Somerset, Bethesda and Anacostia, the average purchase price per car in Somerset is \$67,300. According to Mad Magazine, expensive cars are built specifically to take a few street crack-hits. This is especially relevant to the many Somerset owners of Mercedes, Porsches, Lexus-LX470 and Lamborghinis. It is well known that these cars keep in mechanical sync only if they go over at least seven cracks per week.



Some in Somerset have almost gone into cardiac arrest upon hearing of a Somerset "crack" as large as one millimeter in diameter (0.039th inches)! Have we lost all perspective about how good our streets are now, and are so out of touch in our bubble that

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\$1,000,000 is not really a big deal? Think of what a Somerset donation of \$1,000,000 would mean to Sudan's starving refugees! If we made such a donation, instead of spending \$1,000,000 to pave our still very sturdy streets, then I would be truly proud to say, "I am a Somerset Resident." To make this statement brings up the same stirring emotions as when I heard President Kennedy's speak in 1963 to hundreds of thousands Germans at the site of the (then) Berlin Wall, "Ich bin ein Berliner" ("I am a Berliner!")

Of course to compare I am a Somerset Resident to Ich bin ein Berliner is absurd. But it's comparable to the absurdity of truly believing Somerset needs to spend close to \$1,000,000 to repave its streets next year.

Give Your Used Furniture a Second Life!



Do you have gently used furniture that you no longer need? Your furniture could make a needy family's empty house a home. Please consider donating the furniture to Bethesda-based nonprofit, **A Wider Circle**. Your extra dressers, beds, dish sets, and more could make a huge difference in the lives of local families living in extreme poverty.

Every day **A Wider Circle** receives more than 100 telephone calls, many of which come from families that are literally sleeping and eating on the floor. We respond by providing beds, dressers, and other basic need items free of charge to families in need. In addition to furnishing households, **A Wider Circle** delivers cutting edge health and wellness workshops (e.g., stress management, financial planning and healthy self-esteem) to children and adults in low-income schools and shelters. We need volunteer "furniture movers," outreach assistants, workshop

teachers, office helpers, and more! Please call 301-657-1010 or visit www.awidercircle.org for volunteer opportunities and our complete furniture wish list.



A Green Fourth of July

By Jill Caporale

The Town of Somerset would like to help bring you a green Fourth of July. This year, in addition to our usual fun Fourth of July festivities, the Environmental Committee of the Town invites you to look at some displays on living a greener life. The Committee will be distributing low energy (compact fluorescent) light bulbs with a summary sheet of their economic as well as environmental advantages; 8th-grader Josh Kerry will give out samples and recipes of green cleaners; and we will provide you with some easy steps on how to compost. If you would like further information on our green Fourth of July contact Jill Caporale at 301-907-6684 email jcaporale@nvcc.edu.

It Could Be 100 Years Ago...

Don't Miss the Town of Somerset's July Fourth Celebration!



All Town Residents are invited to the old-time festivities taking place on the 4th of July 2008 at Town Hall.

The picnic begins at noon – bring your own picnic lunch and blanket – the Town will provide birthday cupcakes, ice cream, and punch under the shade of our huge tent.

The program begins at 12:45 p.m. with the Color Guard and National Anthem. Our new Mayor Slavin will introduce special guests, honor this year's graduates, and read the names of our swim team record holders. There will also be a special program to commemorate the service of **Mayor Emeritus Walter Behr**.

Again this year, we will enjoy a patriotic reading of The Declaration of Independence by our local children, followed by games and fun! Get ready for the egg toss, the mummy wrap, races, and more!

Youngsters will have fun inspecting fire and rescue trucks, and guests of all ages will delight in the array of classic antique cars.

Follow the kids on their decorated bikes as we parade down to the Somerset Pool at 2:00 p.m. for water games and fun in the sun. We'll have the traditional coin toss, water balloons, greased watermelon and more! The pool closes at 6:00 p.m.

The whole town is invited, so plan to be there to celebrate with us!

Date: Friday, July 4th

Time: Picnic at Noon - Program at 12:45 p.m. - Parade to the Pool 2:00 p.m.

Place: Somerset Town Hall and Pool

Again this year, the team of Bob Bookman, David Batson, and Frank Loversky will be planning the games and festivities. Ann Brown is handling logistics. All helpers welcome!

For Classic Cars: Call Howard Byron (301 656-9496) to include your pre-1982 car.

Patriotic Readers: Meet inside Town Hall to coordinate your part at 12:30 p.m.

If your child would like to participate in the Patriotic Reading, contact Gina Pack gpack@manifoldproductions.com (all ages, no experience necessary!).

If you have a graduate whose name you would like to include in the ceremony, please email Mayor Slavin at mayor@townofsomerset.com

Hope to see you all on the Fourth!

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Meeting of Town Council

Monday, July 7, 2008 – 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of the June 2 regular meeting – 7:30 p.m.
2. Discussion of financial report – 7:35 p.m.
3. Suggestions and questions from residents – 7:40 p.m.
4. Action on hiring off-duty police for FY09 – 7:50 p.m.
5. Action on RFP to repave some or all Town streets – 7:55 p.m.
6. Action on RFP for pool renovation – 8:10 p.m.
7. Action on revised recommendation by Environmental Committee on RFP for storm water assessment in Somerset – 8:30 p.m.
8. Fact finding hearing and action on application and variance by Cathy Bernard, 5532 Greystone Street, for a recently constructed wall on Town property along her north property line – 8:45 p.m.
9. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Ellis Theodorakos, 4903 Falstone Avenue, to add a one-story addition to the rear of his house and enclose his carport – 8:55 p.m.
10. Fact finding hearing and action on application by Christian and Jossine Josz, 4811 Falstone Avenue, to add a deck to the rear of their house – 9:10 p.m.
11. Action on noise abatement plan by Michael and Abby Nolan, 5807 Surrey Street, for relocating their air conditioning units to meet setback requirements – 9:20 p.m.
12. Action on application by Michael Angell, 4520 Dorset Avenue, to install a generator on the west rear side of the property – 9:30 p.m.
13. Action on Town Code amendment regarding electronic pet containment devices--9:40 p.m.
14. Mayor's report – 9:50 p.m.
15. Developments/plans in the vicinity of Somerset – 9:55 p.m.
16. Action authorizing payment of (1) annual dues of \$5,455.01 to Maryland Municipal League for FY-09 and (2) annual premium of \$3,870.00 to Montgomery County Self-Insurance Program – 10:05 p.m.
17. Confirmation of Mayor's nomination of Lila Snow to Montgomery Municipal Cable Board of Directors to replace Nat Finkelstein – 10:10 p.m.
18. Confirmation of Mayor's appointments of Vicki Frink to replace Harry Freeman, Marnie Shaul to replace Jeffrey Slavin and Cathy Bernard to fill a vacancy on the Audit Committee – 10:15 p.m.
19. Action on Maryland Municipal League Geo Trail resolution – 10:20 p.m.
20. New business – 10:25 p.m.
21. Adjournment – 10:30 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."