



# SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL

*Where people and trees have deep roots and grow strong.*



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## An Interview with Brian Frosh



By Barbara Marenus, Surrey Street, and Jon Medalia, Surrey Street

Many Somerset residents supported State Senator **Brian Frosh** (Grantham) in his primary campaign for Attorney General, and would like some insight into how our neighbor ran his campaign. We interviewed Brian on July 9 and asked the following questions:

**You were trailing in the polls in February and June, yet you won by a landslide. Why were the polls so misleading?** The polls weren't misleading. They were a snapshot in time. Until near primary day, the vast majority of people were undecided. The Attorney General's race is not at the top of their minds. It took people a while to focus on the race.

**You won a landslide over Delegate Jon Cardin. How did you do this?** The plan was for everything to come together at the end, when people were focused on the race. I had support from colleagues; almost all Democratic State Senators supported me, so I had support in every corner of the state. Representatives Van Hollen, Delaney, and Cummings, County Executive Leggett, Governor O'Malley, all supported me. I was also endorsed by the AFL-CIO, environmental groups, teachers, firefighters—in fact, all major organizations that endorse in Democratic primaries. All these people and organizations have networks, and these networks all kicked in in the last few weeks of the campaign, such as by emailing their members. Endorsements by the Washington Post and Baltimore Sun were also very helpful. So it became an echo chamber, in which voters heard about me from the newspapers, from

emails from networks they belonged to, and from TV ads. Everything was backloaded.

**How is campaigning in rural Maryland different than campaigning in Montgomery County?** The same issues are important to Democratic primary voters all over the state, from Somerset County to Somerset in Montgomery County, issues like public safety, the environment, consumer protection, and economic and educational opportunity. The constituency in the Democratic primary is similar all over the state. There is a different constituency in the general election.

**You had a large and passionate group of volunteers, contributors, and supporters statewide. How did you recruit so many people?** I've been in politics for 28 years, and have made many connections, including those from 10 and 20 years ago, like people who testified on bills or who worked with me. Many of them contacted me to volunteer or contribute. I did meet-and-greets all over the state, and debates, and afterwards people would sign up to volunteer. Others would hear of me by word of mouth. And of course people in Somerset were very generous with their time and money. So it snowballed.

**What is your strategy for the general election?** Unlike the primaries, the entire Democratic ticket will run as a team, the governor, lieutenant governor, comptroller, attorney general, U.S. representatives, and others. So we will all be campaigning not only for ourselves but also for the whole team.

*continued on page 5*

### Calendar

**Monday, August 18**  
MVA Mobile Office

Don't forget to check the Town website throughout the month for an up-to-date calendar. Go to [www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com) and click on Town Calendar.



## On My Mind

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

### Somerset Friendships Are Invaluable

Every summer, I travel to one of the USA's most respected health resorts to re-educate myself on optimal living and rejuvenate for the fall. As the leader of a HEAL town, I particularly appreciate the opportunity to get additional tools to promote good public health.

There seems to be general agreement these days that cortisol, a stress hormone, is public health enemy number one. According to world-class athlete Christopher Bergland, writing in Psychology Today, "scientists have known for years that elevated cortisol levels interfere with learning and memory, lower immune and bone density, increase weight gain, blood pressure, cholesterol, heart disease, etc." These are all conditions we want to avoid!

Bergland further writes that there are a number of easy lifestyle choices to make that will reduce cortisol daily, and one of them is to increase or intensify human bonds in the form of friendships.

Realizing it or not, the steps we take in Town to promote interaction among residents—whether at the annual Fourth of July event, the Newcomers party, community service day, or endorsement of our listserv—actually serve a higher purpose. We are helping residents to live longer and happier. This is why I am particularly excited about our new Town motto which noted that our people have deep roots and grow strong together. That is what Somerset is all about.

And, let's not forget that friendships can be hard work. Accordingly, for your longevity and high quality of life, I want to urge everyone to savor everyone important to them, take time to spend with loved ones, and appreciate every day on Earth.



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Deadline for copy and ads is the 15th of the month at 4:30 p.m.

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Open: 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Monday thru Friday

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TTY users call Maryland Relay

# Somerset's Patriotic Readers and How They Came to Be

By Gina Pack, Surrey Street

Isn't it wonderful to hear the Declaration of Independence read out loud each year by the children of Somerset? What other town does that? It is a unique and fun tradition. In case you are wondering how it got started, I'll explain.

The Pack family has been in Somerset for 15 years. Our three boys always enjoyed the festivities at the Town Hall on the Fourth, but these activities were mostly speeches by local politicians and games for the kids. There really wasn't anything about the meaning of Independence Day.

One summer when **Alex Pack** (now 17) was still learning to read, we read aloud *The Little House on the Prairie* series. In one of the books, when out on the plains and the Fourth of July came around, the family found that the townsfolk got together and read the Declaration of Independence, and then there was a horse race. Alex asked why we didn't do that in Somerset. Well, the horse race was out. But the Declaration of Independence? Why not? After all, the Founders didn't get together and have a sack race!

So I asked then **Mayor Walter Behr** (Grantham) if he would give us some podium time at the July Fourth event, and I proposed that **Alex's** older brothers, **William** and **Thomas**, and any of their friends read the Declaration of Independence. We rehearsed just a little, I asked around at swim team and among neighbor kids (there was no listserv then!) and soon we had a little group. We timed it and it was seven minutes.

At first, people thought it was too long. But what to omit? Leave out all those nasty things the King had been doing? (*Cutting off our Trade . . . depriving us of Trial by Jury . . . sending swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance*) or edit Thomas Jefferson? I don't think so!

Others thought the kids were too young, that they would have trouble pronouncing and projecting. (. . . *certain unalienable Rights* . . .) Shouldn't we audition? Even back then, we had lots of debate about things. Somerseters love to opine! I finally decided that there would be no tryouts, and that we would be inclusive and open to all who could read and wanted to. So what if they stumble on the words and grapple to comprehend the meaning? It is *their* Declaration, too, and the kids should just read it through, do the best they can do with it. Every year they would improve, learn more, be motivated to think about it. This would not be a performance, it would be a reading—a very special reading.

This year, we were happy to see more faces than ever clamoring to take part in the reading. Many kids were new this year.

Others have shown up for many years. The older kids again helped the younger ones with the words. Alex has even "aged out" of it this year – well, there really is not an age limit, but after so many readings and, at 6 feet tall, he's done!

And just as William, Thomas, and Alex at one time grabbed the most moving, memorable parts, now younger Somerseters are doing the same. I can still in my mind hear my own children saying, with feeling, dedication, and patriotism, "*We hold these truths to be self-evident*" . . . "*Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness*" . . . "*we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.*"

Traditions are made by families just like yours.

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## See Our New Butterfly Garden

By Barbara Zeughauser, Council Member, Trent Street



The new butterfly garden in Somerset.

For the last few months, the Parks and Natural Resources Committee has been working with the County's RainScapes Program to bring a butterfly garden to Somerset. **Patty Friedman** (Grantham), Chair of the PNRC, identified an appropriate location for the garden near the retention pond at the Pool, and worked closely with the County for many weeks to plan and prepare for the garden. After a number of meetings, the County (finally!) agreed to donate over \$400 in funds to supply plants for the butterfly garden.

During the heat of mid-July, **Patty Friedman** worked with



Left to right: Patty Friedman, Jose Castillo, Tomas Villanueva, Joseph McGhee and Janet McGhee.

our own Town staff, **Enrique Cabrera**, **Tomas Villanueva** and **Jose Castillo**, along with Town residents **Kristen Khanna** (Uppingham), **Paige Whitley** (Cumberland), and **Joseph** and

**Janet McGhee** (Surrey) to prepare the land, create a berm and install the plants. The butterfly garden is now in place by the fence at the retention pond. Hopefully, some butterflies will find their way there soon!

Many thanks to Patty and the entire PNRC for bringing this lovely addition to our Town!





## Pooper Scooper Law

Periodically, we receive notices in the Town Hall about pet deposits not being appropriately cleaned up. This is a reminder there is a **"Pooper Scooper" Law** in Montgomery County. For your information, here is a summary of the law:

*Animal Defecation ("pooper scooper" law) (Montgomery County Code, Sec. 5-203(a)(2))*

*An owner must not allow an animal to damage or defecate on property outside of the owner's property. An animal may defecate on public property or the common area of property in which the owner shares an interest if the owner immediately removes and disposes of the feces by a sanitary method approved by the Director. Feces may be picked up in a plastic bag. If this bag is placed inside another plastic bag, it may be put out for disposal in your normal household trash.*

*Penalty for Violation - \$100*

## Shrubbery Maintenance on Sidewalks

Now that summer is in full swing, please note that Chapter 4 of the Town Code requires private property owners to keep their shrubbery trimmed to ensure that sidewalks are clear for bicyclists and pedestrians. Please contact the Town office if you have any questions about this requirement.

## Contractor Pickup of Branches

I want to remind everyone that the Town's refuse and recycling contractor will not pick up branches unless they are either put in reusable containers marked as yard refuse, placed in paper recycling bags, or bundled up. It is the responsibility of the contractor, not Town staff, to pick up these branches. Branches must not exceed 4' in length or 4" in diameter. This information is also provided in the Town Directory.

## No Parking With Left Wheels to the Curb

This is a friendly reminder that it is a Montgomery County code violation to park your vehicle on the street opposite the flow of traffic (left wheels to the curb).



## Maryland's Handheld Device While Driving Law

According to Maryland law, a driver of a motor vehicle that is in motion may not use the driver's hands to use a cell phone other than to initiate or terminate a wireless telephone call or to turn on or turn off the handheld telephone. With certain specific exceptions, all Maryland drivers are prohibited from using their hands to operate a cell phone, unless the vehicle is stopped.

More information on the law can be found at [http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPI/hang-up\\_hands-free.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OPI/hang-up_hands-free.html)

## Montgomery County's Law on Door-to-Door Solicitation

Please be advised that, per Chapter 47 of the Montgomery County Code, **anyone who solicits door-to-door must first obtain a Vendor's License from Montgomery County.** The license contains various items including the person's picture, business address, license number, and the permit expiration date. Unless representing a non-profit, religious or political group, the person/solicitor should be reported to the Montgomery County Police Department if he/she does not have a Vendor's License.

## E-Journal Sign-Up

We would like to urge as many residents as possible to receive their Town Journal electronically. As a Tree City USA and a PLANT Maryland Community, Somerset wants to reduce its impact on the environment by encouraging residents to receive their copy of the Town Journal by email. If you are not currently on the Town Journal email distribution list and would like to receive an electronic copy, please contact the Town Hall at [manager@townofsomerset.com](mailto:manager@townofsomerset.com) or at 301-657-3211.



# Council Meeting Actions

*The Town Council met in regular session on July 7, 2014. The Council took the following actions:*

1. Approval of the May 5, 2014 Council Meeting Minutes.
2. Approval of the Flu Shot Clinic for September 19, 2014 in the Town Hall from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
3. Confirmation Approval of an Emergency HVAC Unit permit application for 4509 Dorset Avenue.
4. Confirmation Approval of an Emergency HVAC Unit Permit for 4901 Dorset Avenue.
5. Recommendation of the Town Council acting as the Local Advisory Panel to the HPC for property located at 4901 Dorset Avenue. The scope of work includes a dining addition on the south side of the house, new fence on the west side, screened porch, small balcony, garden shed/garden wall at the rear of the house and installation of a generator.
6. Approval of a 2.2-foot waiver request from the 25-foot front yard setback to install a new gabled roof as submitted for 4800 Grantham Avenue.
7. Approval of a building permit application to construct a small entryway in the front of the house and install a new roof at 4800 Grantham Avenue.
8. Approval of site plan modification application submitted for the project currently underway at 5606 Warwick Place. The amendment includes installation of a fence on the sides and front of the property, new front walkway and retaining wall(s) in the side yard.
9. Approval of additional funding in the amount of \$15,995.79 for paving work to be paid to M.T. Laney for work taking place on various Somerset streets.
10. Approval to remove the following two Town trees as recommended by the Town Arborist, Dr. Feather: Tree 691 at 5407 Uppingham Street, Red Maple and Tree 108 at 4910 Cumberland Avenue, Willow Oak.
11. Adoption of a Memorial/Gift Donation Policy was discussed but tabled until the August or September Council Meeting where final approval would be considered.
12. Adoption of a Resolution amending the fee for Morning Swim, setting the fee for 2014 at \$30.00 per resident.
13. Approval of an invoice submitted by Balodemas Architects in the amount of \$3,008.13 for services in relation to the Town Hall interior renovation project.
14. Gail Werner and Nat Finkelstein, representing the Bethesda Fire Board, attended the Meeting to provide an update to the Mayor and Council.
15. In addition to the Council actions, Mayor Slavin provided his report to the Council and Town Manager Charnovich provided the Financial Report. The Council and Mayor held an Executive Session at the end of the meeting to discuss legal and personnel matters.

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*An Interview with Brian Frosh from page 1*

**You took a big risk moving from State Senator, where you had a safe seat, to a statewide office. Why did you take that gamble?** I had been in the State Senate for 20 years, including a dozen years as Chairman of the Judicial Proceedings Committee. I thought I could have even more impact as Attorney General. I chose not to run eight years ago because my children were still at home. I knew it would be a two-year race, and I didn't want to be away from them for most of that time. Also, I had been Chairman of the Judicial Proceedings Committee for only four years, and felt I had more to contribute there. Now, the time seemed right. Being Attorney General is a great job from which I felt I could do a lot of good. If I didn't make the run now, I knew I'd regret it.

**You carried Somerset by 94%. Please describe what other support Somerset provided.** Somerset has been fabulous for me. The 94% is just the tip of the iceberg. Somerset people banged on doors all over the state, made phone calls, and did so many other things a campaign needs. It was hugely important to me to have a network of very dedicated friends. Of course, it's hard to judge how you are doing statewide by the support of your friends and neighbors, but it was a real morale boost!

**What was Marcy's role in the campaign?** Marcy was my surrogate. I was somewhere every night, and Marcy was always somewhere else making speeches and greeting people.



By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

Somerset's most popular event took place on July 4 with the Independence Day celebration, which many said was the best ever. Once again, our local Girl Scout/Brownie trio presented the colors followed by a beautiful rendition of the National and Somerset anthems sung by our own **Andrew Lewis** (Trent). The highlight of the afternoon, as always, was the reading of the Declaration of Independence by a large number of Town students, organized by the incomparable **Gina Pack** (Surrey). Elected officials in attendance included our State Senator **Brian Frosh** (Grantham), Delegate **Susan Lee**, At-Large Montgomery County Councilmember **Nancy Floreen**, and County Executive **Ike Leggett**. All delivered greetings to the audience. We also gave gifts (Somerset beach towels) to a number of our recent graduates and announced the new Town motto authored by **David Sacks** (Trent). The newly created cupcake decorating contest proved to be a big success and we will do it again next year as our latest tradition. Thanks to our great Town staff, **Rich Charnovich**, **Nicole Ventura**, **Melissa Wiak**, **Enrique Cabrera**, **Tomas Villanueva** and **Jose Castillo** for their hard work in putting the day's festivities together. In addition, many thanks to all the Town residents who volunteered. They include **Haya Berman Hakim** (Greystone), **Barbara Marenus** (Surrey), **Jessica Nassau** (Falstone), **Mikey Panner** (Essex), **Elizabeth Hurwit** (Dorset), **David Sacks** (Trent), **Paige Whitley** (Cumberland), **Sue Besharov** (Cumberland), **Vicki Frink** (Cumberland) and **Michael Roark** (Dorset). My apologies if I have left anyone out!

In the last several weeks, I have received requests from a number of residents about the continuing disrespect for several of our Town laws. So I will remind everyone again to please pick up their dog poop when walking their pets, to only put out trash cans the night before pickup, to take the cans in by the early afternoon following the service, and to use a leash when taking your dogs off your property. There are some households where the trash cans are permanently placed on the sidewalk area and this cannot continue. Your cooperation would be appreciated.

While her tenure was brief, our intern **Melissa Wiak** has already found a new position across Wisconsin Avenue in Chevy Chase Village. We all thoroughly enjoyed our time with Melissa and only wish her the best. She did an outstanding job.

While the Town Government does not get involved in partisan political activities, I would be remiss in not congratulating State Senator **Frosh** for his remarkable primary victory for the position of Maryland Attorney General. Should Brian win the general election, he would be the first Town resident to hold statewide office. At that time, we will find a way to honor him appropriately. While he would no longer be representing us in the General Assembly, I am sure there are many issues of mutual interest that he will continue to address on our behalf.

While Pepco has provided better service in the last several years in that we have had less frequent power failures, there were several in recent weeks. As a reminder, repairs are scheduled on the basis of the number of calls received, so be sure to promptly call Pepco when the lights go out at **1-877-737-2662**.

**Safe travels to all in your August retreats . . . be sure to leave all doors, cars, and garages locked.**

## General Permits



### Tree Removal Permits

4805 Grantham Avenue, 1 Tulip Poplar  
4718 Dorset Avenue, 1 Norway Maple

4923 Essex Avenue, 1 Oak  
4809 Falstone Avenue, 1 Red Oak



# Somerset's Fourth of July – 2014

By Jon Medalia, Surrey Street



Uncle Sam Visits Town Hall



Shhh! Cupcake Judges at Work



The Winners!



Our Mayor



Egg Toss



Declaration of Independence

*These photos can be seen in color in the online version of the Town Journal.*

# Somerset's Nonagenarians

By Dolores Bartning, Surrey Street, and Barbara Marblestone, Trent Street

In April, we noted that Somerset has quite a few nonagenarians, residents aged 90 to 99, who would be featured in the Journal in the coming months. These individuals are local treasures, the ones who helped make Somerset what it is today. They are the residents who had the foresight and fortitude to nurture and build our Town. This month, we are highlighting another two residents. Additional nonagenarians will continue to be featured in upcoming issues. To all of them, the Town is grateful.

## Ruth Koffsky



Originally from Brookline, Massachusetts, Ruth, age 92, attended Wellesley College. She started as a math major until her advising professor called her in and counseled her to change her major because no company requiring math expertise would hire her due to her gender and her religion. Despite the fact that she was at the head of her math class, Ruth

changed her major to psychology. After college, she attended aeronautical engineering school, where there were very few women. Later, while working for the Navy Department, she was sent around the country to help set up new naval installations. "The women filled in for the men, due to the war," Ruth related.

Ruth met her husband, Nathan, during a break from college; Wellesley had been temporarily closed to save gas as part of the war effort. The meeting occurred during one of those breaks while she was temporarily home and her future husband, who was in the army, had been sent to Massachusetts to adjutant school. "Someone mentioned to him that if he wanted a good home-cooked meal, he should call this number which was my home, and that is how we met."

After the war, Ruth and her husband came to Washington because he was an economist with the Department of Agriculture. They were living in Silver Spring when they first encountered Somerset on a visit to a sister and brother-in-law who lived on Falstone. The Koffskys liked the neighborhood and moved to Somerset in the late 1940s. Their house was built before there was even a street in front of the house. She remembers that "Greystone was not yet in place—it was a dirt road." Ruth recalls that "during that time, all the Town improvements and changes would occur on Dorset and Cumberland prompting her husband to say that the community south of Dorset and Cumberland was "Lower Slobovia." Since there was no swimming pool in the community, the Koffsky family and other Somerset

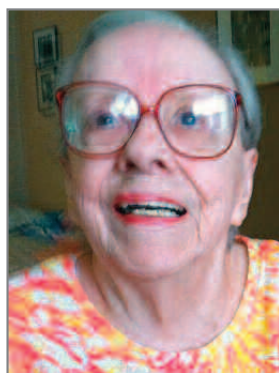
residents would go to the Little Falls pool off of River Road, near Western Avenue. She remembers that Little Falls Parkway did not yet exist, and it was a valley-like area where she took her dogs for runs. She had brought back a Lhasa Apso from India after her husband's stint there working for the World Bank. Her son attended Somerset Elementary School.

For years, Ruth taught swimming at the Chevy Chase Recreation Association. Ruth is proud of the fact that she was known for being able to teach anyone afraid of water to swim. People would come from out of town to her swimming classes. She was also very active at Adventure Theatre as assistant director and prompter. She worked with Anne Chodoff, director of Adventure Theatre, and they even presented productions at the White House.

Ruth's interests have included swimming, playing tennis, and reading. She belonged to the Somerset Widow's club. During the fall, spring and winter, one can see Ruth walking vigorously through town. During the summer, naturally, she swims on a daily basis.

When asked about present-day Somerset, Ruth said that she is pleased "that the Town takes good care of its grounds and keeps things neat. The Town takes care of making everything look nice."

## Dorothy Rose



Dorothy Rose, age 91, came from a coal mining town in Pennsylvania to the Washington area in the 1940s because her family moved here for government jobs. She attended nursing school at Georgetown University, and there met her husband, Dr. John Rose. They started a family and originally lived in Olney, but moved to Somerset because it was a nice

neighborhood and an easier commute to Georgetown University, where Dr. Rose was Dean of the Medical School.

Dorothy and her husband raised five children in Somerset; they attended Little Flower grade school and then private high schools. While Dr. Rose played tennis every Saturday at the Town tennis courts, Dorothy focused her hobbies around her home. She spent many hours working in her garden, both in front and back of the home. Another interest of hers was interior decorating, and she even painted many of the rooms in her home herself. These days, on many afternoons, Dorothy can be seen "taking a walk" in her wheelchair with her caregiver, Lydia, down Surrey Street.

Both Dorothy and her spouse had expressed to their children their desire to stay at their Somerset home in old age. While

*continued on page 10*



# Preliminary Agenda

## Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting

**Somerset Town Hall, August 4, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.**

The Somerset Town Council will meet in regular session on Monday, August 4, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Somerset Town Hall. Agenda updates are posted on the Town website: [www.townofsomerset.com](http://www.townofsomerset.com).

**Council Work Session: – 7:00 p.m.**

**Council Meeting Convenes: – 7:30 p.m.**

**Comments: Public Comment Period: – 7:30 p.m.\***



**Council Members:** Barbara Zeughauser, Cathy Pickar, Marnie Shaul, Franny Peale, Barbara Condos

### CONSENT

1. **Motion:** To consider approval of the June 2, 2014 Council Meeting Minutes.
2. **Motion:** To consider approval of the July 7, 2014 Council Meeting Minutes.
3. **Motion:** To consider setting the date for the Fall Bulk Refuse Pickup for Monday, October 6, 2014.

### NON-CONSENT

1. **Discussion:** Town Manager's July Financial Report – 7:40 p.m.
2. **Public Hearing/Motion:** Confirmation approval of a 2015 Legislative Request submission to the Maryland Municipal League in relation to surplus utility poles – 7:45 p.m.
3. **Public Hearing/Motion:** Approval of trees to be removed in Town Parkland at the rear of 4524 Dorset Avenue as recommended by the Town Arborist and Town Manager – 7:50 p.m.
4. **Discussion:** Georgetown Aquatics presentation and discussion with Clark Baugher – 8:00 p.m.
5. **Discussion:** Mayor's Report – 8:20 p.m.
6. **Adjourn:** – 8:25 p.m.

### Key

**Public Hearing Item:** Agenda item where public comment is permitted.

**Discussion Item:** Agenda item limited to discussion among the Council, Mayor and Town Staff.

**Motion Item:** Agenda item requesting action, limited to Council discussion.

**Comments:** Opinions and Questions from Town residents.

\* Residents who wish to be present for a particular Agenda item are advised to arrive 20 minutes ahead of the item's scheduled discussion time since discussions sometimes run ahead of schedule.

*This is a preliminary Agenda prepared to meet the Journal press deadline, which typically is two to three 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 contact Rich Charnovich at Town Hall if you are interested in what has been added, or consult the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch or the Town website/email blasts for the most up-to-date Agenda.*

the children tried to talk them into moving into a smaller place, it was very important to them to remain at home. One of her sons expressed it this way: "They loved this home so much that they stated their goal was to end their days in it." Dr. Rose got his wish, as he passed away in November 2013. When the time comes, Dorothy will also get her wish. Their son, Richard, who was the source for much of this

information, moved back into the home several months ago so that Dorothy could remain at home.

When asked what it was about Somerset that his parents loved, he said "My parents enjoyed the fact that Somerset had maintained its 'green' environment. They were pleased that even with the new, bigger homes, the Town had not diminished its greenery."