

"Where People and Trees Have Deep Roots and Grow Strong"



SomerseT TOWN JOURNAL



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VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

Voting in the November 3rd General Election



By Nancy Soreng, Leader at the local, state and National Capital Area Leagues of Women Voters, Uppingham Street

Where can I vote?

EARLY VOTING CENTERS: Like everything else about life during the pandemic, the upcoming election will be different than any other we have experienced. Most traditional polling places, such as Somerset Elementary School, will not be in use. There will be in-person voting from **Monday, October 26th until Monday, November 2nd at 11 Early Voting Centers.** The closest Early Voting Center for Somerset voters is the **Jane Lawton Center at 4301 Willow Lane in Chevy Chase.**

ELECTION DAY VOTE CENTERS: On November 3rd, all of the Early Voting Centers plus an additional **29 Election Day Vote Centers** will be open for any Montgomery County citizen to cast their ballot. Along with the Lawton Center, **B-CC High School** will be an Election Day Vote Center. While anyone may vote at these voting centers, they were primarily established for those who must vote in person because they need to update their voter registration, register to vote for the first time, need the

ballot marking device to assist them in casting their ballot in privacy, or they did not request or receive a mail-in ballot. A complete list of early voting locations can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3mNeFhJ>

Why are we encouraged to vote by mail?

Because of the difficulty of recruiting a sufficient number of election judges and the fact that many polling places are in schools that are closed or churches and retirement homes who don't want to risk infection, the State Board of Elections implemented a request by all **24** local Boards of Elections to expand the early voting model to Election Day Vote Centers. If you have requested a mail-in ballot, you will be required to vote a provisional ballot if you choose

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ON MY MIND

LGBTQ Pride Alive in Somerset

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin, *Warwick Place*

This year for the first time, inspired by several Somerset residents and coordinated by At Large Montgomery County Councilmember Evan Glass, who is openly gay, the Town Council unanimously approved the raising of the LGBTQ Pride flag. In spite of the pandemic, the Town sponsored a well-attended flag raising ceremony in June. There was much positive reaction to the move.

It is sad to note, however, that this type of reception and support does not take place in every municipality in the U.S.A. For example, recently in Minot, North Dakota when the Mayor and Council approved flying the same flag, groups of citizens stormed a meeting and caused a ruckus. Newly elected Council Vice President Carrie Evans, a lesbian and a former executive director of Equality Maryland, had to endure terrible treatment in public and private. This story received national attention, and you can Google the details online.

Similarly, many of you might remember what Councilmember Glass experienced--the hate mail, hate calls and the need to basically close down his office--after he announced his program for Pride Week during his first year in office.

All this is to say how fortunate we are to live in a Town where, while not necessarily all of the same political bent, I believe virtually everyone is respectful of basic human rights.

Because of these values, as the Town's mayor, I was proud to join more than 160 other mayors, cities, and local governments in signing a friend-of-the-court brief which asks the Supreme Court to rule in favor of upholding nondiscrimination requirements regulating government contractors in the case of *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, which will be heard November 4. The case considers whether a foster care agency may override the City's nondiscrimination requirement and turn away LGBTQ people seeking to be foster parents. The outcome could have broad implications for the application of nondiscrimination laws around the country.

Somerset's Helping Hand Is Just an Email or Phone Call Away



If you need a ride, someone to pick up some groceries or a prescription, a ride to the Metro, or even if you just want to get to a friend's house, please contact **Somerset Helping Hand**. We have a list of 30 Somerset volunteers who can help.

Send an email to HHSomerset@gmail.com or call **Barbara Zeughauser** at 301-951-8560, **Kathleen Kenyon** at 301-656-8581 or **Jim Berry** at 301-656-6089.

If you would like to add your name to the volunteer list, please send an email to HHSomerset@gmail.com.

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SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL

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Voting in the November 3rd General Election

to vote in person. This is because when you check-in to vote, the Electronic Poll Book will indicate that you were sent a mail-in ballot. They will not know whether you have returned that ballot. To avoid the possibility of people voting twice, you will be issued a provisional ballot that will not be counted unless it turns out that your mail-in ballot was never received. A complete list of Election Day voting locations can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3j08vs1>

Worried about the postal service returning your ballot in time?

Mail in your ballot promptly or use a **Ballot Drop Box**. Secure drop boxes will be placed at 41 locations around the county. Teams of election workers will collect the ballots twice a day. These drop boxes will be under 24-hour video surveillance. By September 30th, the Jane Lawton Center will have a drop box; B-CC High School will have one by October 15th and the Friendship Heights Village Center by October 24th. For a complete list of drop box locations go to: <https://bit.ly/3kKatNJ>

Obtaining a mail-in ballot.

On August 6, the State Board of Elections did a database download of all registered voters in Montgomery County who had not yet requested a mail-in ballot. Because our

local Board of Elections was fully occupied certifying petition signature for two ballot questions, many of the requests for mail-in ballots had not been processed by August 6. Therefore, a number of voters who had previously requested a ballot received an application for one in the mail. To check the status of your mail-in ballot application you can go to: <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch>. Beginning in late September or early October, ballots will be mailed to those who have requested them. The same URL works to check the status of your ballot.

Will my mail-in ballot be counted?

If you signed the ballot envelope, followed all of the other instructions and only voted once, your ballot will be counted. However, it takes much longer to count mail-in ballots than when the voters scan their own ballots at a polling place. While preliminary election results will be available shortly after the election it may take longer for the final results.

If you still have questions, please call the League of Women Voters hotline at **301-984-9585** or contact me at nsoreng@comcast.net.

OCTOBER CALENDAR

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

A Wider Circle Donation Pickup and Donation Nation Bagged Clothing Pickup (see article on p. 5)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

Additional Donation Nation Town-wide pickup (see article on p.5 for acceptable items)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

Bulk Trash pickup
Town Council Zoom Meeting
7:00 p.m.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12

Columbus Day
(Town Hall will remain open and trash/recycling collection uninterrupted)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14

Environment Committee's Electric Leaf Blower Zoom Discussion

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

Town Council Work Session

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

Halloween

A New and Different Somerset Race

By **Jeff Nussbaum**, *Essex Avenue*

For the first time in its more than 30-year history, the Somerset Elementary Back to School Classic won't be happening en masse. But it will be happening this year in a slightly amended (and expanded) form.

Participants will have the option of running or walking timed 2k and 8k races any time between October 15 and October 25 on either the traditional race courses or wherever they happen to be. The traditional course maps can be found at www.somersetrace.com and they will be programmed into an app to help guide runners. The new registration technology also allows runners to create "teams" and have friends and relatives all over the country and the world join the race as well.

As always, the race will be offering a prize for the grade that signs up the most runners. There will be additional

prizes for the "team" that signs up the most runners. The cost is \$40 for adults and \$25 for kids 18 and under. The T-shirt only is \$20. Please note that t-shirts can only be guaranteed to registrants who sign up before October 1st.

The fundraising aspect of this race is as important as it has ever been. Proceeds will go to Somerset PTA and their efforts to support the children of our community through this time of distance learning, and to make sure our teachers and students are as safe as possible when they return to school.

To that end, the race is proud to welcome **Maya Hyman** (Essex) of Compass Real Estate as our new platinum sponsor.

Please go to www.somersetrace.com to register, to volunteer, and to join us for some racing with spacing.



Council Member **Steve Surko** (Uppingham) is pleased to report that his son, **James (Jack) Thompson**, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps on August 28 aboard *U.S.S. Constitution* (Old Ironsides) in Boston, MA. Steve, his wife **Elizabeth Thompson** and their youngest son **Sam** drove up for the ceremony. Steve was back in uniform – for the first time in a long time – to swear Jack in with the Oath of Office.

Standard Permit Conditions Resolution

By **Marnie Shaul**, *Council President, Uppingham Street*

At the September Town Council meeting, a resolution was introduced concerning standard permit conditions, and it will be considered by the Council at its October meeting. It is a common practice for building permits to come with standard conditions. In Somerset, when building permits are approved at Council hearings, conditions can be added to the permit by the Council, by motion. The conditions have included such things as following the tree protection and parking plans which the Town requires of an applicant.

This standard permit resolution lays out in one place a list of standard conditions that must be followed. These include construction noise restrictions, dumpster location, and the like. In this way, the Council need not enumerate every condition as part of its approval of a permit at the Council hearing. This should also make it easier for applicants to know and follow the Town's rules. Not all of the conditions may pertain to small projects such as HVAC replacement, so the conditions are "as applicable."

Donation Opportunities and Bulk Trash Collection

By Matt Trollinger, Town Manager

As people take advantage of the coronavirus to do some cleaning out of unwanted items, many residents have inquired about opportunities for donation and the plans for the Town's annual bulk trash pickup.

Somerset is lucky in that many of our unwanted items are still useable and valuable to those less fortunate. The Town is working with two local nonprofits to give residents an opportunity to donate any unwanted items before putting them out for bulk trash pickup. Both nonprofits have worked with Somerset in the past.



The first nonprofit partner is **A Wider Circle**. The Town has participated in A Wider Circle's largest program, *Essential Support*, formerly known as *Neighbor-to-Neighbor* and *Basic Needs Services*. This program provides beds, dressers, tables, chairs, dishes, pots, pans, and other large and small home goods to families transitioning out of shelters, escaping domestic violence, or otherwise living without their basic need items. **A Wider Circle will be coming through Town on Saturday, October 3 to pick up any of the above items that residents put out and wish to be donated.** (For a comprehensive list of the items sought by A Wider Circle, please look online at: <https://bit.ly/3kLLbiw>).

The second nonprofit that we are partnering with is **Donation Nation**. Donation Nation is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization whose mission is to reduce landfill waste, and supply a variety of tangible and economic resources to benefit the growth of the nonprofit sector. Since 2010, this organization has served over 3,200 customers by removing and redistributing their unwanted items. They have also furnished and improved the living space of over 5,000 homes and diverted over a million pounds of recyclable materials from landfills. In 2019, Donation Nation distributed over 1.5 million dollars worth of goods to nonprofit partners. Donation Nation accepts furniture and appliances, household items such as dishes and glassware (they asked that those items be boxed up), and office furniture and furnishings such as office chairs, pens and pencils, water coolers, computers, copy machines, filing cabinets, office desks, and more. They will also accept clothing, but asked that it please be placed in a bag. They will bring it to their storage facility and work with their partners to determine if it can be salvaged for textile materials, or simply reused. More generally, they said they will take most household items as long as they are not mildewy or significantly stained. **Donation Nation will be coming through on Saturday, October 3 for clothing items (please bag and and label!), and again on Sunday, October 4 for any additional items.**

Please be sure to place any items that you want to donate at the curb by 8:00 a.m. on the appointed day. Any items that are left and not suitable for donation will be picked up by Goode Companies, Inc., the Town's trash and recycling provider, on Monday, October 5.



SOMERSET LEADERS

Barbara Zeughhauser

This is the second article in our monthly series of profiles of our Town's leaders. This month, we focus on Council Member Barbara Zeughhauser (Trent Street).

By Ilene Ringel Heller, *Uppingham Street*

During her three-hour ride in a police cruiser, Barbara Zeughhauser witnessed a harrowing high speed race to an accident scene, the rescue and return to his home of an elderly dementia victim clad only in a diaper, and a stern lecture to teenagers that a shoplifting prank is still a crime. Barbara's interest in learning what it takes to be a police officer, as a graduate of Montgomery County's Citizen's Police Academy, is a reflection of the seriousness with which she takes on her role as a Town Council Member, and reflects her warm and caring outreach to the Somerset community and to those who work with us.

Barbara has been a member of the Town Council since 2009. She is most proud of her role in the remodeling and renovation of Town Hall, which had been neglected for so long. In particular, she is pleased with the art hanging system in the meeting room which enables Somerset Elementary School 5th graders to showcase their art work each year. During a festive two-night period, graduating Somerset students and their parents can see student art work and accompanying poems and explanations. Throughout the rest of the year, Barbara oversees a series of revolving art shows to display the works of Town and local artists. In addition, Barbara is one of the coordinators of the Town's much valued "Helping Hand" volunteer service that provides many different types of assistance from neighbors to neighbors. She loves the fact that she has met so many interesting people in Somerset that she otherwise would not have met and gotten to know. Barbara also enjoys other Town duties such as judging the "If I Were Mayor" contest open to 4th graders at Somerset Elementary School, and hopes that the contest will be resurrected. "It is so interesting to see what kids have to say," she said.

Another Town activity in which Barbara takes pride is the Town's annual nonagenarian ice cream social, which celebrates residents who have lived here for so many years and have such interesting stories to share. Barbara is really

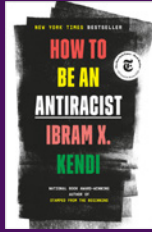
pleased that we are one of those rare communities where so many residents are able to age in place.

Barbara grew up in New Rochelle, NY and received her BS in education from Ohio University in Athens, OH. Teaching jobs were hard to come by in those days so Barbara became a research assistant at GTE in Stamford, CT. In 1977, she met her future husband, George Schlossberg, at a party that neither were invited to in NY. They started a long distance relationship -- made easier by the \$29 shuttle flights -- when he accepted a legal position in D.C. Barbara moved to the D.C. area in 1979 when she became a paralegal at Covington & Burling, and Barbara and George married in 1980. Barbara ultimately became the Director of paralegals at Covington, where she remained for 27 years.

In 1984, Barbara and George began looking for a house in a neighborhood with a good school district and an easy commute to D.C. They had seen a house on Trent that they liked, but decided to pass on it. In 1985, as a new-born daughter, Elizabeth, was getting bigger and their two-bedroom apartment in DuPont Circle was getting smaller, they decided that they wanted that house. Unfortunately, it was no longer for sale. At that time, it was rare to find a house in Somerset on the market. When Barbara and George learned that the house was being rented, they contacted the rental agent and placed an offer. The price went up, but the condition of the house had gone down and could charitably be described as a "disaster."

In the year that had passed, the house had been largely used as an office and had multiple mainframes and other computer equipment and a large number of cats. But with a new kitchen, new floors and paint, they were all set. Their white house on Trent became the beloved home of Barbara and George well before the other "Barbara and George" moved into their White House on Pennsylvania Avenue. In 1988, their son Will was born, and, ultimately,

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How to Be an Antiracist

By Ibram X. Kendi, Professor of Humanities and Founding Director of Boston University's Center for Antiracist Research

Reviewed by Cathy Pickar (Dorset)

The Somerset Town Journal is pleased to announce a new book lovers' column, featuring reviews and comments on what residents are reading now. For this inaugural column, the Journal editors asked former Council Member Cathy Pickar (Dorset) to review a much-discussed book that's relevant to current times: *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi. The book was cited by Mayor Slavin in his On My Mind column in the September Journal. We welcome recommendations for future columns.

How to Be an Antiracist is a memoir. At times funny and others heartbreaking, Dr. Kendi weaves through a changing tapestry of his understanding and experiences with racism from a young child to adulthood. While laying a solid foundation of historical research that includes law and science, he begins his story as an elementary school student in Queens, New York and continues as a high school student at Stonewall Jackson HS in Manassas, VA where he was "more Malcomb than Martin," at Florida A&M, an historic black college, Temple University and currently as a college professor. He entered the struggle against racism through Black studies, a "Black space." His research has focused on defining racism and building toward an antiracist society. He is very clear that the word racist is a useful descriptive term that should be used. It is direct. It is no coincidence, he explains, that with the misguided belief that America was entering a post-racial era as President Obama came into office, the word racist and racism were often exchanged for less exacting terms such as "implicit bias," "tribalism," "culture wars" or "microaggressions," a particularly distasteful term to Kendi. Aggression is abuse. And the persistent "low hum" of racist abuse is not micro.

The book begins with definitions: What is a racist and what is an antiracist. The racist allows racial inequities to continue; an antiracist confronts racial inequities. To say "I am not a racist" is neutral and often a mask for racism. Racist research, as Kendi says, historically poses the question of what is wrong with people. Whereas antiracist research asks what is wrong with policies. The policies behind racism constitute a recurring theme and galvanize, in Kendi's eyes, actions that can lead to an antiracist society. A racist policy sustains racial inequity. It can be written or unwritten; it could be a thought, a law, rule or guidelines by which people are governed. An antiracist policy sustains racial equity. Every community, regardless

of size, sets policy that either sustains racial equity or sustains racial inequity. Kendi points out, for example, that detrimental environmental policies eventually hurt people of color far more than white people. Looked at from that perspective, environmental policy can be either racist or antiracist.

Several chapters begin with definitions of what it is to be a racist or antiracist based on concepts such as behavior, power or biology. For example, the Chapter 8 heading is:

"Behavioral Racist: One who is making individuals responsible for the perceived behavior of racial groups and making racial groups responsible for the behavior of individuals."

"Behavioral Antiracist: One who is making racial group behavior fictional and individual behavior real."

The book is a manual, yet also carries the warmth of a good memoir and story teller. Kendi's optimism comes from seeing the humanism in the individual. While not always an easy read, there is usually an "ah ha" moment of clarity at the end of a difficult passage, but it might take a second glance. It lends itself well to a group discussion and should be required reading for every school's booklist. Dr. Kendi writes that as a child he dreamed of being in the NBA. Ironically, with an earlier book, he became the youngest winner of the National Book Award (NBA) for nonfiction. I am glad he is a writer.

I do want to note that I am neither a social justice scholar nor a historian, and I have never written a book review outside of my profession. However, in seeking a framework to better understand racism, to increase my self-awareness and challenge my own assumptions, I found Dr. Kendi's book a wonderful place to begin. I am happy to share.

IN MEMORIAM: AN APPRECIATION

Douglas Roger Porter



By Joanne Steller, Greystone Street

Our longtime former neighbor, Doug Porter, had a gliding gait that was distinctive for a man of his tall frame. He and wife Cecelia often could be seen walking their beloved dogs

through Somerset's streets—stepping to a waltz-like tempo befitting their musical talents. Many of us knew Doug as host and recital accompanist for the piano and instrument lessons Cecelia gave at their Trent Street home for many years.

Doug died peacefully on April 9, 2020 at age 85 in Oakton, VA, from complications of Alzheimer's disease.

Before we moved to Somerset in 1991, my husband Joe and Doug were colleagues at the Urban Land Institute where Doug was a noted researcher and author in the field of urban planning. What a nice surprise to learn that the Porters lived on the other side of our backyard fence! Every spring, we were treated to practice sessions by Cecelia's students getting ready for their annual June recital. All that wonderful music wafting over the back fence inspired our younger daughter, Katie, to join the legions of Somerset kids who learned piano with Cecelia.

Doug's obituary, which we saw only recently, reminded us of his devotion to his family. He loved

to plan trips throughout the United States and Europe, to cook elaborate holiday meals and to attend his children's music and sporting events. He even came to Somerset swim meets long after his children were grown. Doug was known for his quick wit and puns which, fortunately for all who knew him, never diminished. He was an avid gardener and accomplished musician, playing piano, organ, and cello. He was an active member of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, where he held many leadership positions and sang in the choir.

Born in Lansing, Michigan, Doug received a Bachelor of Science degree in Urban Planning from Michigan State University and a Master of Science degree in Planning from the University of Illinois. He was a longtime associate of the Washington planning firm Marcou, O'Leary and Associates and formed his own consulting business, The Growth Management Institute. In addition to writing several books, he was honored by Maryland Governor Parris Glendening for his service to the state and named a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Among Doug's survivors are his wife of 57 years, Dr. Cecelia Hopkins Porter, his daughter Elizabeth Moran, his son Bartholomew Porter, grandchildren Brenden Porter and Erin Pracht. Doug was predeceased by daughter Rebecca Anne Porter and son Lawrence Elbert Porter.

Doug was a good neighbor and a good man. We are grateful his life crossed paths with ours.

IN MEMORIAM • 1932–2020

John Rosenthal



John Herman Rosenthal was born on December 25, 1932, in Boston, the only child of Benjamin and Freda Rosenthal. He grew up in Brookline, MA, and was in the Honor Society at Worcester Academy

'50. He graduated with a B.A. in sociology from Harvard '54 and an M.B.A. from Wharton '56.

He met his wife, Susan, in the early '50s at Camp Modin in Canaan, ME, where they were both camp counselors. After brief stints as an auditor in the General Accounting Office, which took him to a plum assignment auditing sugarcane plantations in the Virgin Islands, and at his father-in-law's ornamental ironworks shop, John worked as a stockbroker for 29 years for one firm with a rotating list of partners' names: Auchincloss (Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's stepfather), Parker, Redpath, Kohlmeyer, Thomson, and McKinnon. (Claiborne Pell, a good friend of Hugh Auchincloss's, ran his first successful Senate campaign from the basement of the firm at the desk next to John's.) In retirement, which lasted about the same amount of time as his working years, John led a current events discussion

group at Potomac Valley Nursing Home, tutored disadvantaged children, and regularly ate lunch out with his wife.

When working, he often took weekly bike rides through Rock Creek Park and then switched in retirement to daily walks up to the B-CC Rec Center until his knees gave out. He and his wife were the top attendees at the Somerset Pool for several years running, where he swam a mean doggy paddle. John was a world traveler, drove twice with his family in the '70s across the U.S. and Canada, visited all 50 states in the course of his lifetime, and loved taking long rides in the countryside. He enjoyed watching all kinds of sports at all levels. He read magazines and the newspaper voraciously and watched CNBC religiously. He and his wife endowed a scholarship fund at the Jewish Social Service Agency for graduates of Montgomery County public schools to attend vocational school or college.

John and Susan were married for 62 years and lived on Surrey Street in the Town of Somerset for 53 years. John died on January 15, 2020, of prostate cancer. He is survived by his wife, three children and their spouses, five grandchildren, and two step grandchildren.

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Somerset Leaders: Barbara Zeughauser

Barbara and George became the proud parents of Somerset, Westland, and B-CC students and, of course, Somerset Dolphins.

After Barbara retired from Covington in 2006, she rekindled her teaching dream and was a substitute teacher at the Concord Hill School and its camp for several years. She decided to give back to Somerset after all it had given her by joining the Town Council. When she is not busy attending to Council duties, Barbara loves spending time with family and friends, exercising, and walking her dog Sydney, a chinook.

Even during the pandemic she loves seeing old and new neighbors enjoying the Town. Barbara has hosted driveway parties for family and friends in masks. Recently, her daughter, Elizabeth, who works for Google in Denver, drove to visit with her husband, Alex. Her son Will -- a State Department employee who was sent home from Tanzania because of the pandemic -- currently lives in D.C. with his wife, Eleanor, and enjoys masked get-togethers on Barbara and George's screened-in-porch. We look forward to a time in the near future when we can see and chat with Barbara safely unmasked.



Stealth Health

No matter our age most of us are sitting quite a bit, whether in front of our computers, TVs, or while reading or working on craft projects. We may take breaks to go outside and walk, use our fitness machines or swim at the Somerset Pool, but we often go right back inside to do a seated activity.

While there are apps that remind us to breathe, increase our daily steps, drink more water and go to bed earlier, how many of us are actually following them?

That's where **stealth health** comes in. What is **stealth health**? It's sneaking in activity and making it fun. Here are some examples of what I mean:

- Set a timer for 40-50 minutes and when it goes off try some of the following:
 - Turn on some music and dance like no one's watching
 - Do a three-to-five-minute sequence of jumping jacks, squats, side bends, maybe even wall push-ups
 - Balance on one leg at a time for at least 20 seconds

- Have a family "march around the house" and take turns being the leader
- Keep a gallon jug filled with water on the kitchen counter and do arm lifts with it whenever you pass by
- Have a five-minute minimum quiet time where you sit and focus on your breathing
- Get on the floor and play with your dog
- Floss and/or brush your teeth when you are waiting for the shower water to warm up
- Unplug from your devices for periods of time during the day especially before bed
- Walk around your yard and really notice what you see, hear, smell and can touch

What you are doing is adding in small intervals of changed activity that can refresh you and increase your wellness. It doesn't have to be complicated ... just set a timer and get up and move!

Open Video Meetings with Residents

By Council Member Robin Barr, *Essex Avenue*

While campaigning for the Council, I thought to hold open meetings with interested residents. I did not envision staring at a computer screen to make that happen. Yet the meetings are lively and going well. Even once the pandemic puzzle is solved, I will continue video meetings. They work, and you can meet even if you're away.

Topics have varied. Recently, torrential rains prompted storm water discussion. Our Mayor said he is now building the newly authorized committee to investigate this problem and plans to nominate members at the October Council meeting. Separately, I discovered enthusiasm for the idea of a teenage environmental group to complement our environment committee. We will have to see whether some teens are eager to become involved.

An idea originating at these video meetings is a Somerset diversity committee, as several municipalities have formed recently. I raised the idea at a Council working group and found considerable enthusiasm for it. I'm developing a draft mission statement which I hope to introduce at an upcoming Council meeting.

That is what I wanted — ideas from residents about how to better address the well-being of all our residents. But the best part is getting to know my fellow residents of Somerset much better — so hard to do in these pandemic times.



Sustainability Corner

By Barton Rubenstein, Incoming Chair,
Environment Committee,
Dorset Avenue

In August, the Town Council unanimously agreed on my appointment as the new Chair of the Environment Committee. Filling Robin Barr's shoes will certainly be a tall task, but I am excited to continue my focus on the environment in this leadership role. I thought I would start by sharing with you some personal notes of my journey as an environmentalist.

What is an Environmentalist:

You are an environmentalist and so is almost everyone! Environmentalists all love the natural world. We admire the mountains and its streams, the vast oceans in which we surf, and the pristine lakes in which we swim. At home, we spend time in our gardens, weeding, planting, pruning, listening to the birds chirping and looking for butterflies. We also care for the environment. Some of our aspirations are: we don't litter, we recycle, we compost, we drive electric cars, we are vegans, we use renewable energy and LED lights, we minimize our use of airplanes for travel, we have significantly reduced our use of plastic, we rarely use Amazon but rather support local merchants, and we don't use pesticides on our lawns. We also write to our politicians to demand a Green New Deal and we protest for BLM and the Climate Emergency. Environmental racism is now an issue we are heavily focused on. And we always vote for the environment. As a result of all of our efforts, our carbon footprint - the term used to describe how much pollution and disruption to nature that we have caused - is becoming smaller every day.

But hold on a second, is our carbon footprint actually getting smaller? Is it even small at all? Is our footprint the same as somebody living in the rural areas of Zimbabwe? As it turns out, our family's **Mother Earth Project** is connected with many dozens of communities in Africa

Environment Committee's Leaf Blower Discussion Zoom Event Wednesday, Oct. 14, 8 to 9 p.m.

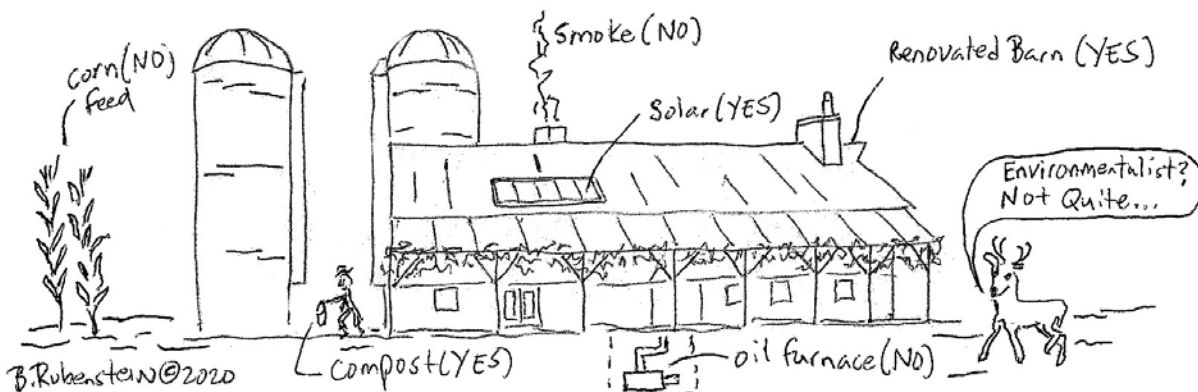
Featured Speaker is Chuck Elkins, Washington, D.C. Advisory Neighborhood Commission Commissioner, who spearheaded the gas-powered leaf blower ban, which begins Jan 1, 2022. He will speak about the background and origin of the law and why he believes that municipalities, particularly the Town of Somerset and Montgomery County, should piggyback on this legislation. Please register here: <https://bit.ly/2FVq3aE>

and around the world, and having heard their stories and concerns for the environment, it is clear that the answer is a resounding "no."

It's a Journey:

But as we now know it isn't about absolutes. We all must try our best to be better stewards of the planet, and try not to judge others for not doing enough. It's all about education, putting knowledge to action, and sharing your journey with others. Sharing takes the sting out of guilt, and it provides a reasonable and achievable path towards reducing one's carbon footprint. To bring you closer into the environmentalist den, I thought I would share some of my personal bumps along the sustainable journey. I'll add a "YES" for things that reduced my carbon footprint and "NO" for those that increased it.

Growing up in D.C. in the 1960s and 70s, our family used to gather the large pile of newspapers each week (NO) and tie them into bundles to be recycled (YES). My father and



mother renovated an old barn (YES) to create a second home (NO) on the Eastern Shore, where we built one of the first solar panel systems (YES) in the United States. We threw all of our compost into the field (YES) and incinerated most of our trash (NO). To date, we rent our land to a farmer who plants corn and soy, 75% of which I now realize are used for cow, pig and chicken feed (NO). The farmer also uses a plethora of pesticides (NO) and poor plowing practices, which has caused a lot of top soil runoff (NO).

More recently, I have converted our electricity to **Clearview** renewable energy (YES), but we still have a backup oil furnace (NO) for when the solar energy system cannot provide enough energy. We also have a ski boat (NO) and as a teenager, I loved going to the gas station (NO) to fill the five-gallon tanks. It was the ultimate act of freedom and the American Dream! Nonetheless, I grew up proud of all of our family's sustainable achievements, mostly ignorant of all of the NO's.

Back at home, my wife, Shereen, and I have tried to continue these traditions of sustainability. We are grateful to afford a large house (NO) in the wonderful Town of Somerset and for decades I would jokingly boast, "You can judge the character of a man by his lawn." I used to water our lawn regularly (NO) and used pesticides to make it look super green (NO). Shereen helped to start **composting** in the neighborhood (YES), and we started to focus on reducing our trash (YES), thus increasing our recyclables (YES). Five years ago, we changed all of our light bulbs to LED (YES).

As a lover of nature, our family has traveled extensively (NO) to National Parks (YES), most recently to Kenai, Katmai and Denali in Alaska, getting to see firsthand some of the most remote and wild regions of our beautiful country. At home most recently, we tend to do curbside

ordering quite a lot (YES and NO), which is convenient except for all of the plastic containers (NO). I use Amazon quite extensively (NO) because it offers a one-stop opportunity to find unique things that we need as well as protects me from venturing out and getting the COVID. I definitely have a reputation in the house for wearing clothes until they are in tatters (YES), but I also wear polyester shirts (NO) on the tennis court. As a sculptor and **public artist**, Strosniders is still my favorite local store (YES) to visit.

Finally, I have followed my daughter to become vegetarian and almost vegan (YES). I placed an info sheet on our fridge to show the protein values of all of the vegetarian options. Pumpkin seeds, farro, peanuts, and chick peas are my favorite high protein choices. Going vegan was my most difficult life-changing task; it took almost three years. As an avid tennis player, Novak Djokovic was my inspiration. If he could do it as number one in the world, then I could. (TOTAL TALLY: 14-YES, 17-NO – What's your tally?)

If He Can Do It, Then I Can!

So, you can see my road is as bumpy as anyone's. I am proud of what I have learned and accomplished, and equally humbled and distressed by all that I need to do. But by sharing with your neighbors and friends and taking collective actions, we WILL make our planet healthier and more sustainable for us and future generations. So, let's keep up our efforts!

If you have any questions about being more sustainable, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, or the Carbon Footprint, please feel free to contact me at: **bartsher@gmail.com**. You are also welcome to join our bi-monthly Environment Committee Zoom meetings, where the public comment portion is a great opportunity for "sharing your story or tally."

GENERAL PERMITS

TREE REMOVAL

- 5610 Warwick Pl.
- 4727 Essex Ave.
- 5502 Greystone St.
- 4805 Dorset Ave.
- 4518 Cumberland Ave.

- 4917 Essex Ave. – Fence Permit Revision
- 5813 Surrey St. – Fence Permit Exemption

From the Mayor's Desk

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin



"School's open, vote carefully"

As mentioned every fall, that catchy phrase was used by a school board candidate I knew decades ago. I think about it every year when schools are about to open. For this upcoming school year, I want to wish all our students well as they cope with many unusual learning and social challenges.

And this year, with the most important election in U.S. history on the horizon, I hope that all of our young people will better understand the importance and power of voting. The day after Labor Day marked the official start of the final sprint of campaigning to the November election date. Somerset residents will have many important decisions to make and now is the time to start paying strict attention. The future of our great country is at stake.

I want to note that the Town staff are finalizing plans for an exciting virtual version of our annual Newcomers event to welcome residents who have moved in over the past year. The date and time will be announced in early October. I hope we can get record attendance this year!

Thanks to the Town Council for approving the extension of the Swimming Pool season well into October. I know that all swimmers are extremely happy with this decision! Additionally, please note that we are planning to continue the traditional dog swim on the season's last day, and details will be available in the near future.

This year the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) again organized the Annual Car Free Day, when citizens of the D.C. region went car free for 24 hours by using public transportation, bicycling or walking... or at the very least went "car lite" and/or carpooled in an effort to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and parking demands, and conserve energy. This is part of an international celebration that took place in over 1500 cities in 40 countries. More information is available at www.carfreemetrodc.org. It was a great way to Go Green and I participated for the seventh year in a row. We will publicize it again in 2021.

We continue to be blessed in Somerset to have one of the best monthly municipal publications in Maryland, especially because of our outstanding co-editors **Barbara Marenus** (Surrey) and **Mary Wisniewski** (Greystone) along with a number of regular contributing writers. As publisher, I am very proud of these folks and want to encourage other residents to participate. We can always use a letter to the editor, news article or family household tidbit, etc. Get in touch with me or the editors regarding any ideas you might have.

For more information on what's going on outside of Somerset, I always enjoy reading the Agenda News online. It has lots of information you cannot get elsewhere about what's going on in the Town's vicinity. The publication is published by Friendship Heights resident Bob Joiner, and is available free when you go to the website at www.theagendanews.com.



Manager's Corner

By Matt Trollinger, Town Manager

Happy Autumn! The air is feeling crisp, football is back on TV, and soon enough the leaves will begin to change. There is something comforting about the change of seasons. It injects some normalcy back into our lives, which have seemed entirely upside-down the past six-plus months.

Notary Services Available

Although the Town Hall is closed except for appointments, I have had more of an opportunity to meet with residents over the past month. Several have taken advantage of the fact that I am a licensed notary and have had documents notarized. Typically, residents can come to the Town Hall for this service, but on several occasions I have gone to someone's outdoor patio or porch to maintain social distancing and take advantage of good circulation of fresh air. It is truly one of — if not my very favorite — part of this job: to be able to interact with residents in this way, to meet and get to know people, and to provide a small service like this. I want to remind people that this notary service is available — free of charge — to Somerset residents. Please just call ahead and we can work out a time.

Somerset Residents Are Active

Another thing that keeps me excited about Somerset is the drive from its citizens to make the community

stronger. Whether it be Environment Committee Chair Barton Rubenstein's (Dorset) Mother Earth Project event on September 25, in a global call to action on climate change; the committee's work to research and put before the Council a proposal to transition to electric leaf blowers; the Pool Committee's advocacy for the Pool continuing to remain open; the residents who have volunteered to serve on the new Stormwater Management Committee; or a group of residents who have advocated for a Black Lives Matter and Racial Equity Little Free Library in Town (which will be on the October Council agenda) — Somersettters are actively pushing the Town to imagine itself as a better, safer, family-friendly, and inclusive community. Those represent just a few examples of the exciting things that are happening right now in Town.

Election Is Approaching

With the 2020 Election just over a month away, there is no better time to get involved in your community. Incidentally, please see former President of the League of Women Voters of Maryland and Somerset resident **Nancy Soreng's** (Uppingham) article about voting in this issue.

Thank you for challenging the Town, yourselves, and each other to continue to grow and make positive changes.

CLASSIFIED ADS

BOZEMAN, MONTANA: Awesome Every Season! Ski Big Sky & the Bridgers! Fly fishing. Trail rides. White-water rafting. Hiking/ biking everywhere. Enjoy our 4-bedroom home on 20 acres with spectacular 360-degree vistas. Four-night minimum stay. Just four miles to downtown Bozeman. Contact **Birdie Pieczenik** at SRPVacationHomes@gmail.com or 301-652-1207.

PARIS, FRANCE: Picturesque Day and Nite! And more affordable than ever! Enjoy our one-bedroom apartment in the 2nd arrondissement — the heart of historic Paris. Walk to the Louvre, the Pompidou Center, the Seine and two Metro stops. Four-night minimum stay. Contact **Birdie Pieczenik** at SRPVacationHomes@gmail.com or 301-652-1207.

LIFESTYLE AND WELLNESS COACHING: Would you like to get unstuck and upgrade your lifestyle and wellness habits? Small changes can make a lasting difference. If you are curious to see if coaching is right for you contact Certified Wellness Coach **Diane Horn** RDH CHHC at 301-654-0310 or diane.b.horn@gmail.com.

SEA COLONY - BETHANY BEACH - EDGEWATER BUILDING OCEAN FRONT: 3 bedrooms and 2 full baths. Sunday to Sunday rentals - \$2,900 per week (Somerset special price) Call: 301-233-2727 **Luba Marx**

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. Ads must include a Somerset phone number. Price: \$5 per advertisement per issue. Check or exact change. Fifty word limit per advertisement.

Council Meeting Actions

The Town Council has taken the following actions:

September 8, 2020

1. Approved minutes from regular Town Council meeting held on August 3, 2020.
2. Approved minutes from Town Council Work Session held on July 22, 2020.
3. Approved a letter of appreciation to Mike Sullivan of de Marne & Day for outstanding workmanship on the Town Hall Renovation project.
4. Approved final payment to Balodemas Architects for services rendered as Project Manager of the Town Hall Renovation project, in the amount of \$4,543.75.
5. Confirm the following appointees, as nominated by the Mayor, to the Town Budget Committee:
 - a. Ann Kelly Bolton, Cumberland Ave.
 - b. Jon Medalia, Surrey St.
 - c. Phil Young, Greystone St, Chair
6. Approved an application by Dan and Aviva Rosenthal for an exception under section 112-37 of the Town Code to allow for a 48" fence in the front side yard at the property located at 5813 Surrey St.
7. Approved the purchase of an electric leaf blower, charger, and extra battery for use by Town Maintenance Staff on public spaces, in an amount not to exceed \$3,000, as recommended by the Town Environment Committee
8. Supported a Parachute Parade event, sponsored by the Mother Earth Project, on Friday, September 25 at 4:30 p.m. to commemorate Global Day of Climate Action, as recommended by the Town Environment Committee.
9. Approved a special exception to the Town Pool rules to allow an outside swim instructor.
10. Approved an addendum to the existing contract with American Pool, extending the Town Pool season to October 25, 2020, in the amount of \$27,688.64, as recommended by the Town Pool Committee.
11. Approved the extension of Early Morning Swim through October 25, 2020, and requiring an additional fee of \$85 per participant, for a total cost of \$773.75, as recommended by the Town Pool Committee.
12. Approved the extension of Water Aerobics classes with Wet Yet? Fitness, at a cost of \$1,785.
13. Approved an extension of the pool monitoring security contract with Skyline Technology Solutions, LLC in the amount of \$1,320.
14. Approved the purchase of replacement pool vacuum and necessary connected equipment from American Pool in the amount of \$2,538.77.
15. Approved Winterization Plan for the Town Pool, as recommended by American Pool, in the amount of \$8,196.27.
16. Approved the removal of the following Town trees, as recommended by Town Arborist, Dr. Tolbert Feather:
 - 5545 Warwick Pl. (behind Town Pool): Ash 18" dbh – dead;
 - 5545 Warwick Pl. (behind Town Pool): White Oak 20" dbh – dead;
 - 4716 Dorset Ave.: Pin Oak 28" dbh – 50% dead, will not revive;
 - 5529 Surrey St.: Trident Maple 12" dbh – dead;
 - 4810 Essex Ave.: Pin Oak 32" – 50% dead, will not revive.
17. Approved of Bulk Trash pickup on Monday, October 5, 2020; and accompanying donation pickups on October 3, and October 4, with A Wider Circle and Donation Nation, respectively.
18. Approved of reprogramming \$7,000 from Reserve Funds for the hiring of a temporary part-time Special Projects Assistant to Town staff.
19. Introduced a Resolution to Adopt Standard Permit Conditions

September 16, 2020

20. Approved of a fence permit revision, submitted by Lance and Meredith Wade, for the ongoing construction project at the property located at 4917 Essex Ave.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Somerset Town Council Meeting October 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

The Somerset Town Council will meet via Zoom on October 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
Agenda updates are posted on the Town website: www.townofsomerset.com.

Somerset Town Council

- Marnie Shaul,
Council President
- Robin Barr
- Franny Peale
- Steve Surko
- Barbara Zeughauser

EXECUTIVE SESSION

7:00 p.m. Recommendations on Hearing Procedures from Town Attorney Ron Bolt.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 7:10 p.m. **Motion:** To consider approval of the following items without discussion:
- Minutes taken from the regular Town Council meeting held on September 8, 2020;
 - Minutes taken from Town Council Work Session held on August 18, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

7:10 p.m. Opportunity for residents to make public comments. *

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

7:15 p.m. Presentation of a Ceremonial Resolution to former Council Member Morris Panner, recognizing and honoring his service on the Somerset Town Council.

NON-CONSENT AGENDA

- 7:18 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of the installation of a Little Free Library on Town property, dedicated to literature pertaining to racial equity and the Black Lives Matter movement.
- 7:28 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a two-month permit extension, as requested by Yogesh Rajkotia, on behalf of Dinesh Rajkotia, for the ongoing construction project at the property located at 5800 Deal Pl.
- 7:40 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a building permit application for proposed addition, patio, walks, steps, retaining wall, driveway, tree removal, and associated site work, submitted by Shay and Alexandra Knaani at the property located at 5404 Greystone St. As part of the application,

the applicants are seeking a 4.7 foot waiver to the Established Building Line restrictions in the Town Code (Sec. 112-2(A-J)).

8:05 p.m. **Discussion:** Building Administrator Report

- 8:15 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of the use the Somerset Pool for Lifeguard Instructor Training Classes, as requested by American Pool, on the following dates:
- Thursday, October 8 from 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
 - Saturday, October 10 from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
 - Sunday, October 11 from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

8:20 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of Mayoral nominees to the Stormwater Management Committee.

8:25 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of the Charter and Mayoral nominees to the Town Audit Committee.

8:30 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of a Resolution to Adopt Standard Permit Conditions, as introduced at the September 8, 2020 Town Council meeting.

8:35 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of rescheduling the annual Dog Swim event at the Town Pool from Saturday, September 25, 2020 to Sunday, October 25, 2020.

8:40 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider approval of rescheduling the annual Newcomer's Party to Sunday, October 18, 2020.

8:45 p.m. **Hearing/Motion:** To consider Town Halloween protocols and procedures.

8:55 p.m. **Discussion:** Manager Report

9:10 p.m. **Motion:** Adjourn

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.

*Questions should be submitted via email ahead of the meeting to manager@townofsomerset.com or town@townofsomerset.com.

The Mayor and Town Council may entertain a motion during the open meeting to close a portion of the meeting, in accordance with Section 3-305(b)(1)(7) of the Open Meetings Act (Maryland Code, General Provisions Article), to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

The Preliminary Agenda for each month's Town Council meeting is posted on the Town website (www.townofsomerset.com) seven days prior to the meeting. A copy is also posted on the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch.