President’s Message

Summer on Kent Island – 2016 – very hot, very heavy bridge traffic, very good late season crabs! But it was also a season of very active heritage happenings. After the frustrating rains in May which cancelled Kent Island Day, there was perfect weather in June to celebrate our maritime heritage with a dinner cruise on the Chester River on the beautifully restored historic River Packet. Check out the story of our cruise in this newsletter.

On the first Saturdays of each month our Historic Sites have been open and welcoming with our knowledgeable docents who share their fascinating stories. Each year we have received more visitors and that trend continued this year. However, this summer the new “Pokemon” phenomenon brought in a number of new families and younger visitors to Historic Stevensville looking to find and capture little “pokemons” (pocket monsters) using their smart phones. My granddaughter says “Well, Papa, you capture and collect them and earn points and stuff – and it’s a lot of fun.” It was a little hard for some of us “elders” to grasp the concept … but having little catchable electronic pokemons digitally sprinkled around the village and around our sites has helped us tell the story of our heritage to the younger generation who came exploring. And that’s a good thing! Who could have known?

Also during the past summer, several projects have been underway at the Kirwan House. We reported in our last newsletter the successful replacement of the old storage shed. The new one is larger, looks great, is compatible with the area, and is doing its storage job perfectly. We have also had an Eagle Scout project underway to refurbish the old agricultural shed to become a new historic venue of tools and farm implements to be opened this fall. A third outdoor project is the restoration of the old Kirwan well next to the pump house. Check out the separate article in this newsletter about this special effort. Inside the Kirwan House we are embarking on the effort to repair walls and plaster molding damaged by severe weather. That project is being funded by a generous $5,000 award from the Maryland Garden Club from funds raised in their annual Spring House and Garden Tour. We really appreciate their timely support.

Continued on page 2
Meanwhile, back over in Stevensville, we own all of our historic sites except one – The Historic Stevensville Bank Building. We have leased the Bank Building for the last 10 years from the Marsteller family, heritage-oriented realtors from Frederick, who have a second home at Love Point. Going forward, there will be a new leasing arrangement. We will still lease and show the bank as an historic site, but there will be a subtenant operating an art-oriented business there on a daily basis. Mr. Marsteller hopes this new compatible arrangement will allow the bank to be open to the public on a regular basis and still retain its unique status as an historic site shown on our tours. We look forward to working with our new partner and hope to share more details in our next newsletter.

In addition to focusing on our immediate heritage society business, we also try to be aware of broader, community-wide issues that could affect our heritage and our quality of life. There are several recent developments that you may have seen in local papers that will impact our future. The Four Seasons project in Chester, north of the Castle Marina circle has been approved for Phase I (162 homes and condos). Total build-out will be close to 1,200 new homes. It has been a long and complicated process, but the county plans to move forward, amid local concerns about traffic, environment, and local compatibility. Each of the next three phases will require separate hearings and decisions - so stay tuned.

Also affecting potential growth on the south end of the Island is the recent county approval to pursue a sewer system down Rt. 8 to address septic problems. Again, stay tuned for further developments. At the county level, we are supportive of a proposed ordinance which would require documentation and protection of archaeological sites and resources in the county, affecting major site plans, major subdivisions, and certain other projects, using established standards and criteria. We look forward to working with the county on these issues. Currently there are no county level laws or requirements for any type of historic preservation regarding those topics.

Jack Broderick
Well Restoration Is a Labor of Love  
by Jack Broderick

We’ve received a donation by contractor/craftsman Tom Willey and colleague, Yancy Sewell, to do a volunteer well restoration project at the Kirwan House. In addition to many paid contractor projects, Tom Willey has done several successful volunteer projects for the Kent Island Heritage Society over the past years, using donated materials and volunteer expertise. These included several projects of rebuilding windows, constructing a new platform for the Stevensville Train Station and caboose, and painting and re-pointing at the Kirwan House, to name a few.

The new project involves restoring the old Kirwan well next to the pump house. It will raise the well profile to about three feet above grade, using primarily reclaimed bricks from a rubble pile in the Kirwan woods near the Creek east of the Kirwan House (pictured below). So the bricks are recycled from old structures that once stood on the farm, most of which were likely made in the kiln that operated on the farm. Details will also include a hinged wooden cover, which can be locked when not in use, and a wooden bucket, suspended from a bar above, to draw water from the well.

The old well was just there, quite low, unsightly, and partially covered with some mounded up rubble. The picture shows the process. The rebuilt well is a substantial improvement, which adds an attractive historic looking touch to the area between the pump house and the old dairy/ice house at the Kirwan House. We’re unveiling it at our Fall Heritage Picnic. We think you’ll like it. Thank you to Tom and Yancy.

Volunteer to work on a committee. 
Sign up by calling Frank Frohn at 410-643-1944. 
Selection of committees is on the facing page.
After surviving the summer of 2016 and its record temperatures and humidity we should all say a word of thanks for Willis Carrier, the inventor of the air conditioner. Our ancestors seemed to manage even while the ladies wore stockings, pantaloons, petticoats and corsets and our men wore a suit and tie most days. They got no relief in the wardrobe department other than ladies could have hats, parasols and hand-held fans. Poor guys, not much provided relief for them. And how about our poor soldiers who had to march in wool uniforms? Somehow, they all managed to survive and here’s how:

Keeping the heat out was the main order of business.
• Awnings were on most public buildings in the towns to shade the sidewalk for pedestrians and keep direct sunlight from the display windows.
• Awnings on private homes were also popular, even on the porches.
• Shutters were kept closed to block the sun, but, let the breeze flow through the slats.
• Heavy drapes were also the order of the day when you wanted to keep that hot sun completely out! Not every day had a nice breeze.
• Lace curtains were thought to reflect the sun while letting in a cool breeze.
• Tall ceilings. Heat rises and cool air falls. Let’s get that heat up to the ceiling and not in our living space.
• Victorians had lots of plants in the house. Plants inside emit moisture that can reduce the interior temperature by 10 degrees.
• Houses were built to provide air circulation. Most houses had a center hall, they were 1 room deep, providing windows or doors on at least 2 sides and as in the Kirwan house, some rooms have windows on 3 sides allowing them to capture the breeze, if there were one, from either of 3 different directions.
• Wrap-around porches provided air from different directions. Put an awning on it and it is divine.
• Transoms were called fanlights. Over doors the transom could provide for ventilation even when the door needed to be closed.
• Lots of trees around the home provided delicious shade to cool the home.
• Some wealthier folks had brick homes that were 3 bricks deep. They cooled in the evening providing relief into a good part of the next day.
• A few homes had sleeping porches which were screened in. In the tenements they often slept on the roof. I have read that in Baltimore people went to Patterson or some other park to spend the night in the wide open spaces where it was a little cooler.
• People opened windows upstairs to draw warm air from downstairs and possibly out of upstairs windows or the cupola, if you had one.

And then there was ice, blessed ice. With the invention of electricity, one could have ice for drinks, place ice in front of an electric fan, ice cream could be produced on a larger scale and summers became a little more bearable.

Air conditioning was actually invented in 1902 but did not become affordable or popular for the average family until the later 1900s. I like the customs and clothing of our ancestors, but, I LOVE my air conditioning. Thank you Willis Carrier, we shall be forever grateful.
by Jack Broderick

After a rainy month in May, causing the cancellation of our annual Kent Island Day, we enjoyed a nice turn-around in June. The weather could not have been more perfect on the evening of June 15, when the River Packet, from Chestertown, docked at the Queen Anne’s County Heritage and Visitor Center at Kent Narrows to meet the Kent Island Heritage Society members.

The society’s June meeting was a celebration of the maritime heritage of Kent Island. About 50 society members and guests boarded the River Packet and enjoyed a relaxing three-hour dinner cruise on the Chester River.

Last year we celebrated the 40th anniversary of The Kent Island Heritage Society with a special cruise on the River Packet. It was such a great experience that many members urged us to do it again this year. It was just as successful this year. During the cruise, members and guests were treated to an outstanding array of hors d’oeuvres and a Chesapeake surf and turf buffet dinner prepared and served by Occasions Catering of Chestertown, with which the boat is affiliated.

Periodic narrations of the history and heritage of the area, as well as wildlife and geographic points of interest, were shared by Capt. Greg Kimmel and KIHS President Jack Broderick on the cruise.

“There’s been a lot of history here - 385 years worth of European history and nearly 12,000 years of Native American history in and around these waters,” said Broderick. Various stories and vignettes were shared about that history.

“You get a really different perspective and feel about our history when you’re out here on the water where so much of it happened. The Packet folks are a pleasure to work with, and the food is great.” said Broderick. “I think everyone who cruised came away with a deeper appreciation of our rich island heritage and had a good time in the process.”

In the words of Heritage Society board member Alex Johnson, “... the entire evening was delightful.”

Information on the River Packet is available at chesterriverpacketco.com.
The Automobile in America

By Carole Frederick

Perhaps no invention affected American everyday life in the 20th century more than the automobile.

Although the technology for the automobile existed in the 19th century, it took Henry Ford to make the useful gadget accessible to the American public. Ford used the idea of the assembly line for automobile manufacturing. He paid his workers an unprecedented $5 a day when most laborers were bringing home two, hoping that it would increase their productivity. Furthermore, they might use their higher earnings to purchase a new car.

Ford reduced options, even stating that the public could choose whatever color car they wanted — so long as it was black. The Model T sold for $490 in 1914, about one quarter the cost of the previous decade. By 1920, there were over 8 million registrations. The 1920s saw tremendous growth in automobile ownership, with the number of registered drivers almost tripling to 23 million by the end of the decade.

Economic Spin-offs

The growth of the automobile industry caused an economic revolution across the United States. …

1. The demand for vulcanized rubber skyrocketed. Road construction created thousands of new jobs, as state and local governments began funding highway design. …

2. The federal government became involved with the Federal High-
way Act of 1921.
3. Gas stations began to dot the land, and mechanics began to earn a living fixing the inevitable problems.
4. Oil and steel were two well-established industries that received a serious boost by the demand for automobiles.
5. Travelers on the road needed shelter on long trips, so motels began to line the major long-distance routes….
6. The quintessential American foods — hamburgers, french fries, milk shakes, and apple pies — were hallmarks of the new roadside diner. …
7. Families vacationed to places previously impossible. Urban dwellers had the opportunity to rediscover pristine landscapes, just as rural dwellers were able to shop in towns and cities.
8. Teenagers gained more and more independence with driving freedom… and dating couples found a portable place to be alone as the automobile helped to facilitate… this.
9. Americans experienced traffic jams for the first time, as well as traffic accidents and fatalities….
10. Demands were made for licensure and safety regulations on the state level.

Despite the drawbacks, Americans loved their cars. As more and more were purchased, drivers saw their worlds grow much larger.

There are many interesting automobile stories from Kent Island. Dr. C. Percy Kemp was the first person to own a car on Kent Island, in fact, he was the first one to own a car in Queen Anne’s County. This was reported in the Queenstown News, May 12, 1900.

My Aunt Clara told me that they could listen to the sound of the cars (or trucks) riding by their house in Stevensville and tell who it was: “Well, there goes Baby Grollman” or “Grandfather never goes over 20 mph” or “There goes Bobby Benton on that tractor.” This was back in the late ’50s when ‘everybody knew your name’ and vehicles had distinctive sounds. There are many more stories from the ‘50s and ‘60s but first let us go back to the teens.

Linday Severa Collier’s father and his brother were inventors and she has written a story to tell you the many things they invented, including a car!
3rd Annual Historic Stevensville Classic Car Show
Saturday, November 5th, 2016
9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Join us in downtown Historic Stevensville for a day of cars, music, food, art and fun!

Trophies will be presented!
Dash plaques to the first 50 registered cars!
*Participant cars enter at RT 18 and E. Main Street, Stevensville
(Corner where Salvage Sisters is)

For more info call Nancy Cook 410-758-2502

The event is sponsored by the Historic Stevensville Arts & Entertainment District (501©3), proceeds will fund future community events in the district.

With support from the Kent Island Cruisers
THE SEVERA BROTHERS
by Linda Severa Collier

Over the years I have been asked to write articles about my father, Edward Severa, and his brother Albert, known to all as Monk. As the next few editions of the heritage society newsletter will be covering stories about automobiles, I felt the time was right. I was only 28 when my father died and his brother had died 3 years prior to my birth, so I shall begin with a recollection written by Calvert Jones for the then weekly Kent Island Heritage Society column in the Bay Times, October 1977.

My first story today is of the Chester Service Station. You may wonder why a service station would be included in the history of Kent Island, but this is not just a run of the mill service station. The building still stands in Devil's Dominion on the left side of the road to Little Creek. In and of itself it has little significance, but, the two brothers who ran it, whom I shall respectfully refer to as the “characters”, are important to our heritage. Albert died in 1942 and Ed in 1972. Ed’s widow, Charlotte, still lives on Kent Island as does his daughter Linda. His son Edward Jr. or Bunk and his wife Shirley have the gift shop and realty company at the Fisherman’s Inn complex at Kent Narrows. The people who knew Eddie and Monk considered them mechanical geniuses. Ed returned from World War I and immediately set up a repair business. It was a well know fact that any mechanical device, regardless of its nature, that they couldn’t fix was hopeless. With a screwdriver, monkey wrench, hammer and a pair of pliers, augmented with a bit of bailing wire, they could make anything from a boat engine, automobile, steam engine or farm machine run. I remember both my grandfathers and my father telling me this when I was a child.

Just repairing other people’s machinery wasn’t enough of a challenge for these “boys.” On the side, they built from the ground up, three automobiles including the bodies. They built a self propelled steam engine and I’ve heard stories that they also worked on an airplane. It is very difficult to pry information from the family, but, they do not deny this. Several weeks ago I published a picture of one of their automobiles and this week, I have another. We’re also printing pictures of Edward and Albert. Edward is the serious one.

According to daughter Linda, when Uncle Monk died in 1942, Eddie lost his incentive, but still exhibited his genius in gadgets he dreamed up. After Edward died in 1972, the family auctioned the contents of the Chester Service Station. It took fifty truck loads to haul old automobile parts (many in original boxes) to the 4-H Park. Over 2,000 people from all over the United States quickly purchased the entire inventory, piece by piece. I was privileged to know both of these gentlemen.

Well I was privileged to know only one, my Dad. I never knew his parents as they had died in the late 20s. I can, however, relate the things that I witnessed and other stories about them that I have heard through my life.

First, a little history of the Severa family. James Kirwan (not yet a senator) met my grandfather, Joseph Wenceslas Severa, when he was a student in Baltimore living with his Czech immigrant aunt. Some say he was studying to be a priest. He (Joseph) was at the foot of Light Street where lads used to hang out at the ferry landing to pick up part time employment. Mr. Kirwan struck up a conversation with him (he apparently spoke English) and asked him if he’d like to come over to Kent Island and work in his sawmill for the summer. He accepted and never went back to Baltimore. I don’t know what year that was but I have found evidence at the Kirwan house that he was there in 1892.
and 1893. In 1893 he also became naturalized with James E. Kirwan serving as a witness to his character. He then wrote and asked a childhood sweetheart from Bohemia to come over and they were married a couple of months later in 1894. That same year Mr. Kirwan sold them a lot for $100.00 on which to build their home.

He was a talented calligrapher and one of his masterpieces of calligraphy, a tribute to James E. Kirwan, had hung in the Kirwan home until Catherine’s death. Catherine always promised it to my brother and me, and thankfully, it is now in my possession.

So, that is how the Severa family came to Kent Island.

And now for the rest of the story.

My father was born in 1896. In the same newspaper of 1917 that announced Kent Island’s win against the war department, there was a column showing the first 40 lads from Queen Anne’s County called to war. My father was one of them and at 21 years of age went off to France. Names like Grollman, McPherson, Thompson, Eckstorm, Coursey and Grimes were also listed from Kent Island. Gerhardt Colin, Percy W. Thomas, Ed Milliner and Ellison Coleman were listed as alternates and went later. Jeff Davis from Centreville was called and became the first soldier from our county to be killed in the war, thus the naming of the American Legion Post in Centreville in his honor.

My father never talked much about the war. He did say the horses used in the artillery division were still half wild and hard to handle and he was glad when he got transferred to the infantry. He said he remembered counting 80 barrage balloons behind German lines one day and they knew something big was coming. Apparently it was and he was severely wounded at Chateau Thierry in the Battle of the Marne. He received the Silver Star and also the Purple Heart. He always wore that Silver Star in the lapel of his suits. If the suit had no button hole in the lapel, my mother would make one.

As stated by Calvert Jones, after my father recovered from his injuries (which really affected him the rest of his life) he and his now 20-year old brother built a shop on a lot next to their parents’ home. They opened an automobile and boat engine repair business. There were not a lot of vehicles on the road as this was the early 1920s. They were the Dynamic Duo and I have heard them called the Kent Island Wright brothers. I heard they had plans to build a helicopter when Monk died at age 42.

The first car they built from scratch had bicycle tires for wheels and alarm clock faces for headlights. I have seen a picture of it, but, sadly it has gotten away from us. The second and third cars are pictured. They made it all, even sewing the tops.

These men were gifted, industrious, generous, curious and inventive. My father, for sure had a terrific love of God and country which was probably enhanced by his military experiences. He was the Sunday School superintendent of one of our island Methodist churches for more
than 50 years. Teddy Lee told me that people called him Dominion Moses because he was the epitome of what a Christian man should be. When he married my mother he transferred to the Kingsley Methodist Church where she attended. My friend Rena Jones Dye said he taught her patience as she had to sit, head bowed, through many of his long prayers. Apparently, my brother did not learn this lesson as Dot Wagner said she saw my brother crawl out the window of the church during one of my father’s lengthier renditions. He insisted that I learn piano so I could play for Sunday School. Sometimes Rena and I would share this chore by her playing one hand and I the other. I don’t recall being happy about it.

Captain Eddie (anyone owning a boat apparently got this title) and Monk were said to own the first radio on the island. It used headphones, so, in order for others to hear, they put the headphones in a large dough bowl that worked as an amplifier and their friends could all hear it sitting around the dining room table. I am told my uncle Monk could, with very little practice, play most any musical instrument he could get his hands on. We have a picture of him and 4 others on the steps of the Selby store entertaining anyone who would listen.

I surely wish I had known these two when they were in their prime. I do know that my Father was the calmest man I have ever known. He not only talked the talk, but, walked the walk and was remembered fondly by all who knew him. Yes, even those who got behind him as he slowly drove his pick-up truck up the road. Of all the things that people have told me about him, the word SPEEDY never entered the conversation.

**Note to all members:** If you have pictures of the cars that were popular during your younger years please share them with us (and any stories that go with them) so they can be shown in the next issue of the newsletter. Please identify any people appearing in the pictures if you can. You may email them to frederickcarole521@gmail.com or snail-mail them to Carole Frederick, 521 Love Point Road, Stevensville, MD 21666
GUITAR RAFFLE

Win a signed, hand-crafted PRS SE guitar. Tickets are $10 each. Drawing will be held at 6:30 pm Saturday, November 26, 2016 during Small Business Day in Stevensville at the holiday tree lighting ceremony

Proceeds will benefit Historic Stevensville Arts & Entertainment District

Tickets may be purchased at the following businesses
Tradewinds
My Little Studio
Stevensville Antiques

Wanted: Alive and Kicking

A Public Relations volunteer for the society

If you are or know someone who is technically savvy and bent on keeping the society on the front page, please contact Jack Broderick, President, at 410-643-7452 or email him at jackandlizzie@atlanticbb.net.

We have board members who will keep you informed of events if you will see that the info gets to the public.
**Membership Form**

I/We wish to be a member of The Kent Island Heritage Society.

Enclosed is a check to cover dues of membership for one calendar year:

- $15 Single Membership
- $25 Family Membership
- $25 Organization
- $250 Life Membership per person

Name ______________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________

Phone______________________________________________

Email ______________________________________________

**Interests:**

- History _____
- Genealogy _____
- Photography _____
- Docent Program _____
- Property Maintenance _____
- Special Interest ____________________________

Mail to: The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.
PO Box 321, Stevensville, MD 21666

**Dues and contributions are deductible on your income tax.**

**Membership period is January 1 to December 31.**

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**In Memoriam**

Rose T. Lane
1922 – 2015

Phyllis Lowery Davidson
Pippin
1927 – 2016

Our death is not an end if we can live on in our children and the younger generation. For they are us, our bodies are only wilted leaves on the tree of life.

~Albert Einstein
The O C Boardwalk
by Alex Johnson

Walkers, riders, striders, and bikes,
Sweethearts, joggers, moms, and the tykes,
on the Boardwalk.

Uncles and Aunties, June bugs and bums,
Elvis, day trippers, everyone comes
to the Boardwalk.

Seascape, Dunes, the Hide-Away Bar,
St. Patrick’s Day, some antique car
on the Boardwalk.

Phillips, Kite Loft, Alaska Stand,
Fishers, Thrashers, the One Man Band
on the Boardwalk.

Trimper’s Rides and M. R. Ducks,
Bring some money, but no big bucks
to the Boardwalk.

Pigeons, gulls, and those that feed them,
Pelicans and those that watch them,
on the Boardwalk.

Purple Moose, Playland, lots to do,
Springfest, Sunfest, the inlet view
on the Boardwalk.

Boardwalk’s ready, it’s a comfort knowing
Everything’s open, let’s get going
on the Boardwalk.
We extend our congratulations and thanks to Jack Shaum as he retires as a reporter from the Bay Times.

His decade and a half tenure with the Bay Times was a second career for Jack, having retired after 30 years as the radio voice at WBAL morning news in Baltimore.

As a strong proponent of local and maritime history, Jack made endless contributions to the understanding and appreciation of the heritage of Kent Island, and has truly made a difference in our community.

We look forward to a continuing relationship with Jack, especially as our Kent Island Day Parade announcer.

Best wishes to Jack from the Board of the Kent Island Heritage Society.
Kirwan House Receives $5,000 for Restoration Work

Officials of the Queen Anne’s County Garden Club, Kent Island Garden Club and the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage presented a check for $5,000 to The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc. The donation comes from the proceeds of this year’s House and Garden Pilgrimage held April 30.

Each year the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage asks the sponsoring club to select a project they want to support with some of the proceeds from the tour. The Queen Anne’s County Garden Club, which was this year’s sponsoring club, chose the Kirwan House Museum. A full article regarding the pilgrimage occurred in the Spring 2016 Heritage Society newsletter. Several of our board members served as docents in various houses on the tour to help make this a successful event.

Superstorm Sandy left a lot of damage in its wake – some of which was at the Kirwan House. The exterior damage has been repaired but there was water damage to the interior walls and ceilings as well as the wallpaper. This donation will be used to repair the interior damage on the first floor of the house.

The Kent Island Heritage Society is deeply indebted to the afore-mentioned clubs and also to Linda Collier.

Linda has been the curator of the Kirwan Store Museum and parts of the house since we inherited it from Senator Kirwan’s granddaughter in 1994. She has researched the period it was in operation and has saved and refurbished many items that were actually in the store when it closed. She has also added authentic items found from her exhaustive research. One of the reasons we were probably chosen to receive this generous donation is because of the thoroughness and seriousness this site has been preserved.