

# Islc of Kent - 1631

*"To Discover, Identify, Restore and Preserve the Heritage of Kent Island"*

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. ■ SPRING 2002

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## President's Message

**A**ND THE RAINS CAME . . . thus Kent Island Day had to be rescheduled for its rain date, Sunday, May 19.

Many thanks must be given to chairpersons of the various committees who spent early Saturday morning, May 18, calling to notify their volunteers that the commemoration of the 371st anniversary of the founding of Kent Island would be rescheduled.

Eva Thompson, entertainment chair; Myrtle Bruscup, genealogy and bake sale chair; Audrey Hawkins, docent coordinator and vendor chair; Deborah Clarke, parade chair; Greg Nizza and John Smigo, facilities co-chairs, were well prepared with telephone numbers. Most participants were quickly contacted.

**THEN THE SUN CAME OUT . . .** and what a glorious day Sunday was.

Attendance at craft presentations and activities was excellent. The 18th century militia encampment; the quilts displayed by Queen Anne's County Quilt Guild, coordinated by Mrs. Pat Wood; Joyce Moore's Antique Doll display; the genealogical display, compiled by Mmes. Mary White, Myrtle Bruscup and Teresa Kilian; the antique clothing so beautifully arranged by Barbara Nash and her daughter, Tyra; and Mr. Joseph DiPietro's wonderful wooden model boats were just a few of the attractions throughout the day.

A new activity added to this year's celebration was a Walking Tour of

*Continued on p. 8*

## Rain Delays KI Day

By Rose G. Spik  
BAY TIMES STAFF WRITER

**STEVENSVILLE** — Sunday morning dawned sunny and cool, the perfect day for Kent Island Day. The event was originally scheduled for Saturday, but a steady morning downpour forced The Kent Island Heritage Society to postpone until Sunday.

"It's an honor and a privilege to be here with you all, and I am so glad the weather cooperated," said Heritage Society President Nancy Cook.

Honored guests Florence and Gil Dunn listened as Cook and County Commissioners John McQueeney and George O'Donnell praised them for all their hard work for the Heritage Society and the community over the years.

"Long before there was a Rite-Aid . . . Dr. Dunn

*Continued on p. 2*

*Reprinted with permission as published in the May 22, 2002 issue of The Kent Island Bay Times.*

## Mark Your Calendar

### KI Heritage Society General Meeting

**Tuesday • June 11 • Kent Island Library**

**7:00 Refreshments • 7:30 Guest**

**Speaker**

**Mr. Darrin Lowery, Tilghman, Md.**

*In Jan. 1990 KIHS began a process in partnership with the Maryland Historical Trust that would result in retaining Mr. Lowery to do an archeological survey of Kent Island. Conducted in 1992, the survey of Kent Island fields and shorelines yielded numerous artifacts and 2,000 pages of information documents.*

## Rain Delays KI Day

*Continued from p. 1*

came here and offered a service for a long, long time," said O'Donnell. The Dunns owned and operated a pharmacy in the Kent Island Shopping Center until 1999, when they sold the business.

"They have done so much for us and the community and they are such an instrumental part of The Kent Island Heritage Society and the Kent Island community," said Cook. Whenever Gil Dunn has seen a need for something lacking in the community he has taken action, said Cook. He was instrumental in starting the Kent Island Little League and a motivating force behind starting St. Christopher's Church.

"He always wanted Kent Island to have its own community band," said Cook, and it was through Dunn's hard work and effort that the Kent Island Volunteer Band was formed.

During his tenure as president of the Heritage Society, Dunn took a keen interest in restoration and brought a dilapidated train depot to Stevensville. With volunteers from the community pitching in Dunn helped turn the train depot into a legitimate historic site.

"The Dunns have always said Kent Island has been a blessing to them, but I must say they have been a blessing to Kent Island," said Cook.

After serving as grand marshals of the Kent Island Day parade the Dunns enjoyed the festivities, which included plenty of food, historic displays, 18th century settlers' campsites and crafts.

At the campsite blacksmith Spike Stoner made nails the old fashioned way with hot coals and iron, while dinner was being served next door.

"We are making what is called 'bubbles and squeak,'" said Shirley Stoner, stirring a small cauldron of stew made up of cabbage, potatoes, onions, sausage and salt and pepper.

"In the 18th century lots of other herbs were used to help disguise the rancid taste of the meat. They didn't throw anything away," said Stoner.

And why the name 'bubbles and squeak'? "The bubbling from the boiling stew and the squeak was the sound of the pig," said Stoner, as she and the settlers sat down for their meal before starting their afternoon chores of soap and candle making.

## Know Your Board

### CHARLES "GIL" DUNN

Gil learned in the summer of 1953 that the builder of the Kent Island Shopping Center was looking for someone to open a pharmacy. "I didn't know where it was," says Gil. So he took a ride from his hometown of Baltimore, crossed over the new Chesapeake Bay Bridge—then a single span—and there was Kent Island. The shopping center was still under construction.

Thus began 40 years of operating the Kent Island Pharmacy, more commonly known as Gil Dunn's Pharmacy.

Gil's interest in baseball was evident in a display—unexpected in a pharmacy—of Jimmie Foxx memorabilia. Foxx, a Sudlersville native, was MVP in 1932 and '33 for the Philadelphia Athletics and in 1938 for the Boston Red Sox. This interest also led to his sponsorship of a little league team, the Lions, which led a couple of years later to the formation of the Kent Island Baseball Little League. Today, that league involves more than 1,000 boys and girls.

He also was very much involved in the establishment of St. Christopher's Catholic Church in Chester.

Gil became associated with The Kent Island Heritage Society in 1975. When he served as president from 1986 through 1988 he had such difficulty getting musicians for Kent Island Days that he formed the Kent Island Volunteer Band, which performs at numerous functions throughout the county. He also was significantly involved in restoration of the Old Stevensville Train Station, now a popular attraction.

"I enjoyed it," he declares. "Living on Kent Island has been a pleasure for me and my family. Many good things happened to us here."

### FLORENCE DUNN

Florence came with husband Gil [see above] to Kent Island from Baltimore in 1954. The family's home for the first five years was the Stinton-Sudler or Cockey House that is pictured on the cover of Mildred Schock's book, "Of History and Houses," an overview

of historic homes on Kent Island.

Florence has lived in the Town of Stevensville since 1960. Her 5 children, 3 sons-in-law and 12 grandchildren all think of Kent Island as home. "Moving to Kent Island has been a blessing to all of us," she says.

She has been very active in St. Christopher's Catholic Church since 1955 and has worked in its religious education program for children for more than 20 years.

Florence became a charter member of The Kent Island Heritage Society in 1975 and has been involved in its many activities throughout the years. "I have enjoyed the activities, the pursuits, the interest and the learning of The Society," she says.

She is secretary of The Kent Island Heritage Society and serves as docent at the Old Stevensville Train Station.

### CAROLE PRICE FREDERICK

Carole was born in her maternal grandparents' farmhouse on Kent Island during World War II. She is the daughter of Charles Clayland Price Jr. and Louisa Mitchell Davidson Price. Dr. Sattlemeir was the attending physician, Mrs. Anna Auldreich the midwife, and—since her father was away in the war—Grandfather Price—who, at 103, still lives there—gave birthing instructions.

She grew up on her fraternal grandparents' farm about a mile north of town, where her mother still lives. She was the oldest of seven children; she has one son and two grandsons.

She lives in Stevensville in an arts and crafts style bungalow designed by her cousin, Clinton White, for his uncle, Clint Jones, as a requirement for graduation from high school.

Carol graduated from Stevensville High School, class of 1961, and from Western Maryland College in 1965 as a music education major.

She retired in 1998 from Anne Arundel schools, where she taught for 31 years. They hired her back to teach music and typing.

She loves playing bridge, bike riding, music and socializing with family and friends.

## Alex Johnson Wins Poetry Prize

Kent Island Heritage Society member Alex Johnson has recently won a first prize in the 6th Annual Eastern Shore Regional Poetry Contest, sponsored by the Queen Anne's Arts Council. Here's his poem:

### Ashes

For years he dumped the fireplace ashes  
Out on the bulkhead rocks,  
"To hold the grass and ground,"  
His father said.

Here he filled a grocery bag,  
There a cardboard box,  
Then made his journey out,  
Advice and direction in the air.

"Hold that bottom two-handed.  
Have you your boots?  
It's muddy there.  
Stand upwind when you dump or  
You will be back,  
Looking grim and gray  
Long before your time."

Didn't a bottom give way once.  
All afternoon wind puffs gave  
The yard a dreary, dismal look.

"Make me a heart-wood box this big,  
"His father said, "For carrying, and  
Carve a bird or flower on the lid."

He carved a bird, Phoenix-like  
For the ashes  
Or the answer to some prayer,

And then the old man was gone  
His ashes carried out in the box  
Carried out barefooted.  
Heart-wood box under one arm  
He stood deliberately downwind  
And dumped;  
As if to let the old an get in his face  
One last time.

*Alex, also a wood-crafter, has donated his models of Heritage Society properties for display.*

*Intricately detailed models of Cray House, Kirwan House, the Old Train Depot and the Old Stevensville Post Office, a Lilliputian 8-inches high, are on display in the Old Stevensville Post Office.*

## Crossing the Bay On the "Smokey Joe"

J. Edward Yealdhall

I remember "Smokey Joe,"  
the Baltimore to Love Point  
ferry. Hard to say when it  
started running. Surely it would  
have been in operation before  
1910 because that is the year the  
Love Point Hotel was  
constructed.

The longest running  
ferryboat, to our knowledge,  
was the *Philadelphia*, which  
began the run in 1932. My first  
trip was in 1935 and regularly  
after [that] until the last run in  
1947.

The "Smokey Joe" was  
operated by the Pennsylvania  
Railroad. Throughout the year  
[it] made 20 round-trips a week,  
three a day with one layover on  
Sunday night for maintenance.  
Passengers traveled on the top  
deck, indoors or out. Beer, soda  
and food could be purchased.

Slot machines were  
there—penny operated! Cars  
and trucks occupied the four  
lanes on the lower deck. I  
remember the truck drivers  
shooting craps during the trip.  
For the 1930s, seeing all those  
\$10 bills moving around was  
quite a sight.

My mother liked to pick up  
bargains from the produce truck  
drivers, especially those  
incomparable Eastern Shore  
cantaloupe.

I remember seeing photos in  
the pilot house of rescues made  
on the ice of the bay by the  
*Philadelphia*. One time, it is  
recorded, it even broke loose an  
icebreaker ship which was stuck  
fast. The heavy flat-bottomed  
boat could ride up on the ice  
and break through any in its  
path.

One sidelight to put our  
economy in perspective: I  
remember a Sunday trip in  
either 1937 or 1938 when we

had Sunday dinner at Miss  
May's, a small hotel, not a  
private home on Pier Road  
above the ferry slip. The meal  
consisted of fried chicken, a soft  
crab, peas, potatoes, corn on the  
cob, iced tea and ice cream for  
dessert. The cost was one  
dollar!

In 1947 after "Smokey Joe"  
banked its coal furnaces, I  
began to drive to Sandy Point to  
take the ferry to Matapeake on  
Kent Island. It was a nice 20  
minute ride . . . but not really  
the same! (As good old  
"Smokey Joe.")

*Reprinted from a 1993 edition  
of Isle of Kent. Mr. Yealdhall  
has since passed on.*

## In Memoriam

Mr. Mervyn C. Sparks

Ms. Gail Baxter  
Rumenap

*The Society is very  
thankful for the interest  
and support shown over  
the years by these  
members of our  
organization and our  
community.*

*We will continue to honor  
their memory by  
discovering, identifying,  
restoring and preserving  
the heritage of Kent  
Island.*



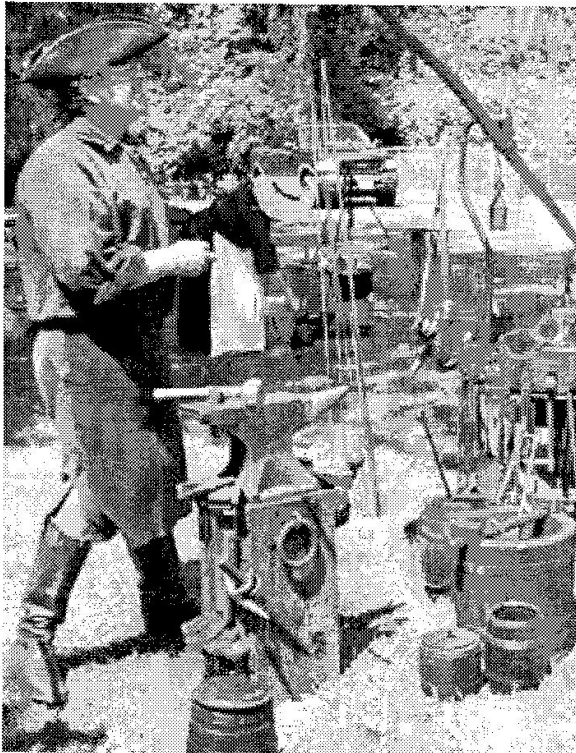


▲ The Gil Dunn Family

▼ Blacksmith Spike Stoner makes nails.



▼ Parade Grand Marshalls  
Gil and Florence Dunn



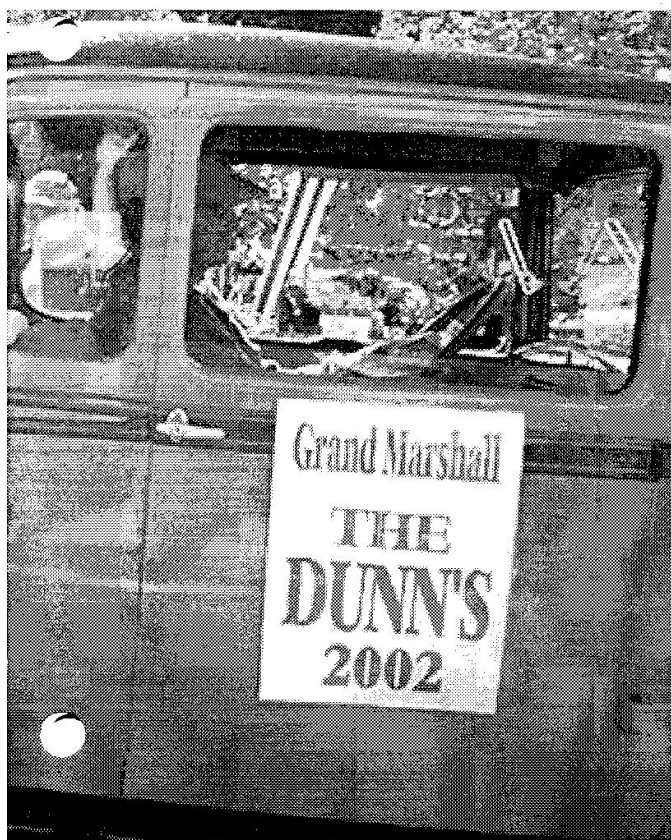
Grand Marshall photo by Jean Leathery  
Other photos by Rose Spik, Bay Times



▲ Fran Peters, Emma Thomas, Eileen Dadds, Audrey Hawkins at bake table.



▲ Nancy Cook, Gil Dunn at opening ceremony.



▲ Twyla Hirrlinger, Shirley Stoner, Alice Petree, Spike Stoner, Tom McElroy have colonial meal.

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## Cakes and Genealogy

**Myrtle Buscup**

LIBRARY FILES COMMITTEE

We had a great, festive Kent Island Day. The cake table sold out before closing time. We had two tables filled with all sorts of goodies. Many thanks to those who baked and also those who donated cash. A special thanks to Jane Grafton and Mae Hutchison for manning the tables from start to finish.

Saturday's terrible weather required contacting many people to reschedule the event for Sunday. A great many thanks to my telephone callers, Eileen Dadds, Jane Grafton, Mae Hutchison and Fran Peters.

A new feature of Kent Island Day was a Genealogy Table. Mary White and I spent many hours at the library determining which items would be most interesting to display. We selected old pictures of Stevensville High School, grade schools, hotels, homes, post office and churches. We displayed the family history chart of William Claiborne, who established the first English settlement on Kent Island on 1631. We had binders of the Baxter and Nash families, a book of burial permits, newspaper articles and much

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## GREETINGS FROM KIRWAN HOUSE

**Greg Nizza**

Kirwan House Caretaker

Things are proceeding nicely here at historic Kirwan House in Chester. The yard and gardens are really starting to come together. Springtime was just beautiful with flowers and

more.

Teresa and Chris Killian were in charge of the Genealogy Table (after participating in the parade). Teresa is well versed in genealogy and has held many sessions at the library and other places for those interested in researching their family trees. Family tree forms were on display, as well as a publication, "How to Go About Starting Your Own Information."

Our collection of information and pictures, family histories, Bible records, books and other publications has outgrown its three file cabinets at the library. A fourth is being added to accommodate such acquisitions as three additional volumes of obits and marriages from 1893 through 1897.

The utility of these files increases with size. If you have family genealogy charts or old family Bibles with birth and death notations, please let us add copies of them to our records.

bulbs in bloom. Thanks to The Kent Island Garden Club and the ladies who came down and mulched and planted flowers and rosebushes.

New grass seed has been planted in several bare spots. The overgrown front corner has been cleared of brush, and I am renovating the original drainage ditches. Most of the old concrete pathways that outlined the extensive gardens have been uncovered. It has really brought out a lot of the character of the old gardens.

Inside the house, wallpaper has been stripped and the wood floors are scheduled to be refinished in June. Once the floors are completed, the original furnishings will be moved back into the home from storage.

The second phase of plumbing work will also take place this summer, relocating the washer and dryer out of the original storeroom and hiding the exposed pipes.

This will set the stage for restoration of the old store, which will be a museum area open to the public. Our goal is to be able to open the store for public viewing this fall.

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## President's Message

*Continued from p. 1*

Historic Stevensville, facilitated by a new brochure prepared by editor John Bonner. Willard Thomas's woodworking skills produced the numbered signs placed at each site described in the brochure.

We are already planning next year's event, always held on the third weekend in May, as designated by the General Assembly and signed into law by then-Acting Governor Blair Lee.

The enclosed brochure is for sharing with someone you think might be interested in joining our organization.

*Nancy M. Cook*

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## Welcome New Member

Edward G. Smith  
Centreville, Md.

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## The Grave Site At Terrapin Park

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**Gil Dunn**

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Almost everyone who lives on Kent Island or nearby knows where to find Terrapin Park. But only a very few know anything about the grave site there.

Several months ago I was taken to the site. From the parking area at Terrapin Park, we walked along the trail for approximately half a mile, then into the brush, stickers, high grass and wooded area to the burial place of James B. Ringgold, 1806-1866. His wife, Rebecca, is also buried here.

The wrought iron enclosure was half knocked down and partially buried in the soil. The grave site stones were nearly obliterated, except for the head stone of James Ringgold and the foot stone that clearly showed J.B.R.

Although thoroughly searched, it was difficult to determine who had

owned the farm bearing the Ringgold graves.

Now the area has been cleaned up, the grass and brush have been removed, and the site is not too difficult to visit from the park trail.

Yet another piece of old Kent Island history has been identified, preserved and documented by The Kent Island Heritage Society.

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## Isle of Kent

John Bonner, Editor

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