

# Isl of Kent - 1631

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

NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

FALL 2019

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## President's Message



We have good news to share. Historic Christ Church will be saved! You may recall from our last newsletter that the County Commissioners had decided to declare Historic Christ Church in Stevensville surplus property - "not needed for any public purpose" and they offered the property for sale! They ultimately received five proposals for varying uses of the property. The church is an iconic, historic Kent Island landmark and The Kent Island Heritage Society took a strong

public position advocating that the property be owned or controlled, as a public use facility, by a local nonprofit entity with the primary purpose of historic preservation and not operated as a private business. We are happy to say that the Commissioners made the right decision - to deed the property to the "Friends of Historic Christ Church" as we had recommended. Details are still being worked out, but we commend our Commissioners for their decision and look forward to assisting and supporting the "Friends" group to insure that the church is preserved for posterity.

After the success of our spring events - the Kirwan House and Garden Tour and a great Kent Island Day - we are pleased to include the Christ Church decision as a significant 2019 heritage event. We also ended the school year on a high note. Our heritage adventure in the High School that we described in our previous newsletters was well-received by the students. We were elated to learn that they included highlights from each of our monthly presentations in their yearbook! I think we enjoyed the presentations as much as the kids did. Thank you Kent Island High School and Principal John Schrecongost ! We look forward to coming back this coming school year.

Each year we also present a scholarship to a graduating KI High School senior. This year we were proud to award the 2019 scholarship to Casey Elizabeth Smith of Chester. Casey is a multigenerational Kent Islander who has excelled in her high school years. Please read and enjoy the thoughtful essay presented by Casey as she shares why her Kent Island heritage is important to her. Congratulations, Casey!

Meanwhile, back at the Farm - the Kirwan Farm - additional exciting things are happening. The long-awaited blacksmith shop is finally underway! Our resident blacksmith, Mike Bouchall, has been working his magic forge with hammer, fire, and steel at Kent Island Day for many years. His encouragement to consider a permanent home for these talents is now realized - with permits in hand we finally broke ground in early August. Check out the article and pictures in this issue.

*Continued on page 2*

## KIHS Committees

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Lynnda Kratovil

Barbara Marmion

Carmen Mendez

Fran Peters

Hanna Wall

Marilyn Wilson

## PROGRAMS

### Kent Island Day

Jack Broderick, *Chair*

John Conley

Carole Frederick

Toni Gibson

Bob Lowe

Jamie Sasse

### Picnic

Carole Frederick, *Chair*

Toni and Jay Gibson

Linda and Butch Collier

### June General Meeting

Jack Broderick, *Chair*

### Annual Election Brunch

Toni Gibson, *Chair*

*Continued from page 1*

We also have some other exciting news to share. Most of us love Kent Island archaeology as verified when we hosted local archaeologist, Dr. Darrin Lowery, to an overflowing crowd in Historic Christ Church. He brought his "stuff" and many folks brought their "stuff". He also came to Kent Island Day to share his exciting finds and look at ours. Well here's the news: Dr. Lowery is planning another local archaeological exploration on Parson's Island in 2020 and has requested KIHS support. We are supporting his grant request to the Maryland Historical Trust and look forward to being part of his team for the actual dig. More information on that will be in a future newsletter.

The only downer we have to share is the cancellation of our June dinner sunset cruise due to serious weather predictions. We coordinated with Captain Greg and made a prudent decision. Though disappointed this year, we look forward to other adventures in the future.

We want to remind you that our historic sites are open regularly on the first Saturdays from April through November and by special request. We thank each of our dedicated docents for bringing our sites alive with colorful stories of our island and the unique heritage of each site. We are always looking for a few good men and women, including some of our high school students, to join our team of docents. Folks interested in joining this team should contact Sally Lewis at 443•249•3203 or Nancy Cook at 410•758•2502.

Meanwhile, we hope you'll consider joining us on Sunday, September 22 at the Kirwan Farm for our annual fall heritage picnic -a great "down home" event where you'll eat delicious food and see firsthand, the progress of our new "old" blacksmith shop. Picnic information is available in this issue of the newsletter. We hope to see you then!

Thanks to each of our members for continued generosity and support.

*Jack Broderick*

## CALENDAR 2019

### JANUARY 16

BOARD MEETING

### FEBRUARY 20

BOARD MEETING

### MARCH 20

GENERAL MEETING

Darrin Lowery, Ph. D.  
Guest Speaker

Historic Christ Church @ 7:00 p.m.

### APRIL 17

BOARD MEETING

### MAY 15

BOARD MEETING

### MAY 18

KENT ISLAND DAY

### JUNE 19

GENERAL MEETING

Annual Cruise

### JULY 17

BOARD MEETING

### AUGUST 21

BOARD MEETING

### SEPTEMBER 18

BOARD MEETING

### SEPTEMBER 22

ANNUAL PICNIC  
@ KIRWAN HOUSE  
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

### OCTOBER 16

BOARD MEETING

### NOVEMBER 20

BOARD MEETING

### DECEMBER 9

ANNUAL MEETING/BRUNCH

ELECTION OF OFFICERS  
FISHERMAN'S INN  
12:30 - 4:00 PM

# Kirwan House Happenings

By Linda Collier

Our slogan at Kirwan House is "Always an Adventure". So much is going on that the property is always in transition.

Our picket fence had been looking shabby for quite a few years. Last spring in preparation for the Maryland House and Garden Tour, we were spiffing up our property including extensive renovation of the front picket fence. It was a beautiful sight to behold and we were bursting with pride - for 10 whole days.

Yes, for ten whole days we admired the handiwork and then it happened! An unknown vehicle hit a deer which flew up against the fence and took out about fifteen feet. It is in the nature of old properties that as soon as one thing is fixed another goes bad. But this was unbelievable. That glory was short lived, but repairs will be made by the fall.

The reward of seeing old structures and returned to their original state is well worth the effort. However, sometimes the building is so dilapidated it needs to be torn down. That brings us to the re-creation of the blacksmith shop. It is under construction as this newsletter is going to press. In the newly re-constructed gazebo a brick floor was installed and an existing brick walkway joined to it. Also, the garden club donated a bench for the interior in memory of one of their deceased members.

Additionally, we have been the recipient of some antique tools that Capt. John Selby used to build boats. In spite of a bump or two we have had a very productive summer. Come see for yourself.

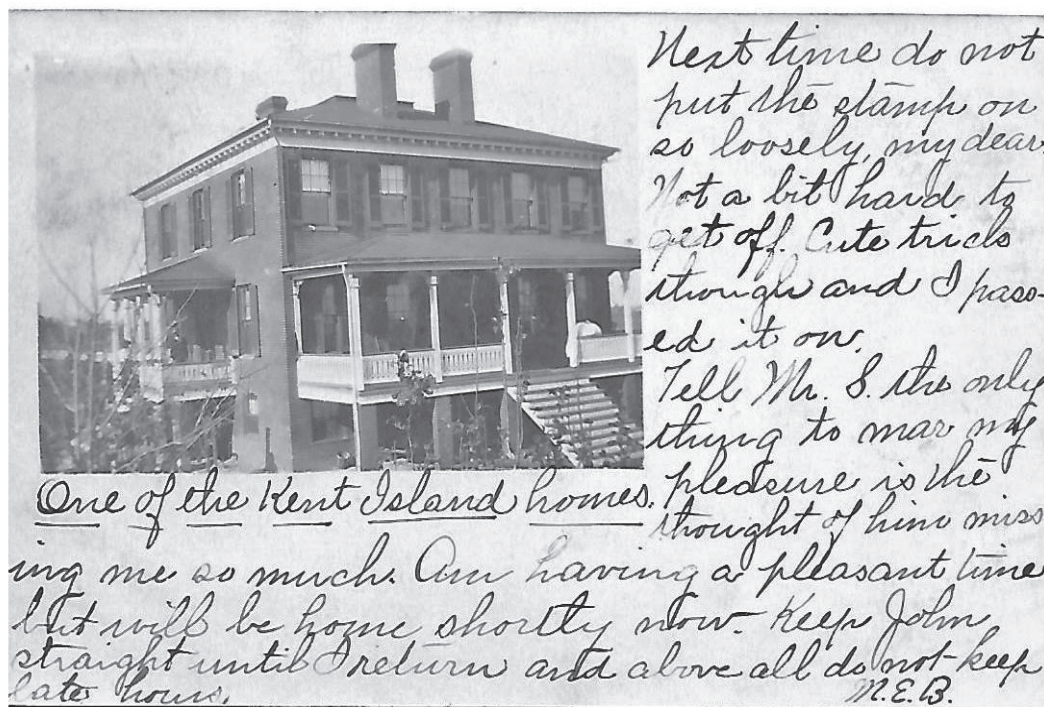


New Gazebo Bench donated by Kent Island Garden Club  
In Memory of Rawle Mannix

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## POSTCARD from Kent Island: Body's Neck (Castle Marina)

Submitted by John Conley



The sender of this 1907 postcard from Stevensville to Towson, Maryland, certainly got her penny's stamp worth. The house in what is now Castle Marina was built in 1860 by John C. Tolson, according to the KIHS publication *Of History and Houses*. Over the years it was known as the "house at Body's Neck," Yachtsman Inn, and Riverside Manor on the John Ruth Farm. The property goes back to William Body who was granted one hundred acres of land in 1650. The building, though modified, stands today and is home to The Pour House Pub.



# USS Kent Island AG-78

*Submitted by John Conley*

Kent Island: an island in the Chesapeake Bay, Md., where a trading post was established in 1631 by William Claiborne.

(AG-78: dp. 5,766; l. 441'6"; b. 56'11"; dr. 23'; s. 12.5 k.; cpl. 883; a. 15", 12 20mm.; cl. Belle Isle)



USS Kent Island AG-78 (U.S. Navy Photo)

Kent Island (AG-78) was launched 9 January 1945 by New England Shipbuilding Corp., South Portland, Maine, under a Maritime Commission contract; sponsored by Mrs. Nan Hatch; transferred to the Navy 19 January 1945; commissioned the same day, ferried to Todd Shipbuilding Co., Hoboken, N.J.; decommissioned 23 January 1945 for conversion to a barracks and issue ship; and re-commissioned 1 August 1945, Comdr. W. C. Ball, USNR, in command.

After shakedown in the Chesapeake Bay, Kent Island cleared Norfolk 31 August for duty with the Service Force of the Pacific Fleet. She arrived in Pearl Harbor 9 October via San Diego to commence operations in Hawaiian waters. She sailed for Okinawa 17 October to receive Navy veterans for transportation to the United States, and returned San Francisco 30 November. Kent Island cleared San Francisco 3 January 1946, transited the Panama Canal, and arrived in Hampton Roads 26 January. Following upkeep, she put into Orange, Tex., 15 March where she was placed out of commission and in reserve 22 June 1946. She was re-designated AKS-26 on 18 August 1951 and struck from the Navy List 1 April 1960. Kent Island was sold to Southern Scrap Material Co. 2 November 1960 to be scrap.

This information came from *Navsource Online*.

## HELP WANTED



**Wikipedia** - ... a title given in the United States of America to persons who serve as guides and educators for the institutions they serve, usually on a voluntary basis.

**Miriam - Webster** - ... in the U.S. a docent is a guide who works at a museum, an historical site, or even a zoo or a park. Docents are usually volunteers, and their services are often free of charge.

**Dictionary.com** - A person who is a knowledgeable guide - especially one who conducts visitors through a museum and delivers a commentary on the exhibitions.

### KIHS NEEDS DOCENTS AT OUR SIX HISTORIC SITES.

The main qualification is that the person enjoys learning about and sharing our special local history. Training will be provided by current KIHS docents and you can serve as often as your schedule allows. Our sites are open on the first Saturday of each month and for special events and school tours. Compensation is an ongoing fun learning experience.

You can find a "Docent Form" at [kentislandheritagesociety.org](http://kentislandheritagesociety.org), contact any Kent Island Heritage Society Board Member, or just show up at one of our sites.

**WE NEED YOU AND ARE GRATEFUL FOR ANY HELP YOU CAN OFFER!**  
**THANKS**

- Part 2 -

## Captain Gene Herbert, Stevensville's Oldest Man, Looks Back at Past Days From Great-Grandfather on, Family Followed the Water

Reprint from

*Queen Anne's County Record Observer, Thursday, July 27, 1939, 4<sup>th</sup> Section, pg. 5, Centreville, Maryland*

The old Episcopal Church was probably the next landmark to be established. Although the building is in ruins now, from dates on the tombstones in the churchyard, the building must have been constructed before the year 1720. It was located near the main highway (word missing maybe going toward??) Matapeake on the farm now owned by Dr. Charles E. Snyder. The church was near a small river which has now been filled in by the ages, but legend has it that Indians used to come up this creek in their canoes and go to this church.

About the next date of importance was the War of 1812 in which Kent Island figured. This story came to Capt'n Gene indirectly but is supposed to have originated from a Mrs. Porter who was an ancestor of the present Captain Harry Porter of Kent Island. The British had moved from Washington into the mouth of the Patapsco in preparations to attack Baltimore while they were encamped here, a boy from an advantage point in the top of a tree, shot and killed the British General Ross. The boy was captured and executed while the British General was carried to the battleship. The boat carrying his body landed near Stony Bar in Broad Creek on Kent Island and it was here that the British General was buried. While on the Island it is told that the British took all the cattle, sheep and other food they could find. On September 13, 1814, they returned to the Patapsco and attacked Fort McHenry.

Francis Scot Key, a thirty-five-year-old American lawyer visited this British fleet in order to secure the release of a friend of his and was held prisoner during the bombardment of Fort McHenry and it was at this time that he wrote the "Star Spangled Banner" the national anthem of the United States, although it has never been officially adopted as such by Congress.

Contrary to the belief of many of the natives of Stevensville, the store long owned by Mr. George Calloway was not the first store in Stevensville. In fact, there were three stores before this. Some of the owners of these stores were J M Stevens and J H Tolson. A Mr. Willis who later moved to Baltimore was one of the most prosperous storekeepers. At first Mr. Willis kept a store or warehouse, as it was known then, near Matapeake at the site of the present Grover Clough Filling Station. In 1860 he moved his store to

Stevensville at the site of the present store owned by Mr. Earle Long. About this same time, there were approximately three saloons in Stevensville. One was at the site of Mr. Archie Legg's home and was the same building in which Mr. Samuel Bullen dwells at present. A man by the name of Blake kept this saloon. Another saloon was in the same site of the IGA store in Stevensville run by Mr. Addison Frampton.

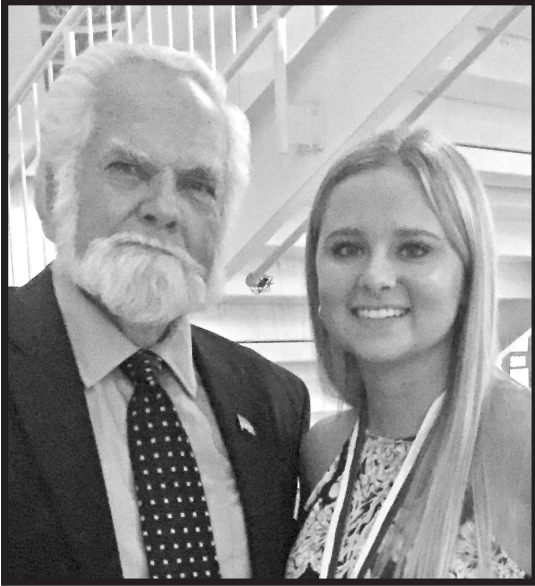
Among the first homes built in Stevensville was the home of the Crays just off the main street. This building is still standing and being used as a home for the same family.

About this time Cap'n Gene tells us of another murder which occurred on Kent Island. Strangely enough, this murder also occurred near Broad Creek but was probably after the time of the tavern. The murder concerns two Negros. It seems as though there was a broken back Negro, whose name has been forgotten by our narrator. Evidently, Broken Back was seeing too much of Robinson's wife, the Negro concerned. Under cover of night, Robinson met Broken-back, and killed him with a terrible blow of a club. Robinson buried his victim in the woods on the farm of Mr. Charles Paca. Later, the body was discovered by dogs and Robinson was taken to court in Centreville, but nothing could be proven on him and he was consequently freed.

About this time, 1864, the Civil War was in full swing. Stevensville was in sympathy with the South and a few of Kent Island's sons joined the Confederacy. About all Stevensville and Kent Island saw of the Civil War was a few deserters who escaped from Baltimore, crossed the bay and escaped into Queen Anne's county, skirting the edge of Stevensville.  
(to be continued in the next newsletter)

# Kent Island Heritage Society Scholarship Essay

by Casey Smith



Scholarship recipient: Casey Smith with  
President of Heritage Society, Jack Broderick

Being raised on Kent Island has allowed me to grow and flourish as a person. I spent my childhood years attending Kent Island / Bayside Elementary, and later Matapeake Middle School. I am now a senior at Kent Island High School and plan on continuing my education at the University of Maryland, College Park. Science and Medicine have always been subjects I am passionate about, and I will be majoring in biology with a goal of eventually obtaining a job in the medical field. During my four years at Kent Island High, I have enjoyed playing for the varsity soccer team, and being elected captain during the past fall season. I have also been a member of the Student Government Association, the National Honor Society, and Interact Club.

Kent Island has a uniquely special and deeply rooted history that many aren't aware of. For the sake of future generations, physical reminders and evidence of the eventful past in this area should be protected and maintained. While history

will always be passed down through generations and kept in books, there are only a few historic buildings and artifacts left. Sites such as the Old Stevensville Post Office and the Stevensville Bank are necessary for the remembrance and celebration of those who used to live here and the past way of life. Children and grandchildren of current Kent Island residents should be able to enjoy seeing remnants of the area's history firsthand.

The culture and traditions of Kent Island must also be preserved by protecting the natural lands that have contributed greatly to society. The waters surrounding the Island in which European settlers sailed, where watermen made a living for hundreds of years, and a diverse range of animals and plants live, should be conserved. The farmlands, marshes, and woods were once vital to the economy and are important components of the Kent Island Heritage. These areas have diminished slightly over the years, which is inevitable, but that means what remains must be taken care of.

Preserving the heritage of Kent Island is especially important with the influx of new people. As more and more move to the Island to enjoy the scenery and many opportunities, it becomes more difficult to maintain the traditions of the past. Kent Island has always had a small town sense of community where you can rely on your neighbors and friends. Local businesses have been able to thrive due to the support of those who live here, and this must continue in order for Kent Island to retain its identity. There is a way of life on Kent Island that can't be found in other places, and most that have found their way here are glad to call it home. Maintaining the heritage of the community is what allows people to feel a sense of comfort and belonging.

To some Kent Island may just be a town they ride through to get from the western shore to Ocean City. To those who have spent their entire lives here, however, there is great value in preserving the many things that make Kent Island unique.

*Historic Christ Church  
will remain a key part of  
KIHS sites with which  
we can share our history  
with the community,  
including school groups.  
The Queen Anne County  
Commissioners have  
deeded the property to  
Friends of Historic Christ  
Church with whom  
KIHS will work closely to  
preserve and protect this  
iconic structure.*



## This 'n That

### **ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS:**

Please let us know the dates that you will be away and/or home so we can send your newsletter to the correct address.

Call Carole Frederick at 410 739 7445 or email to [frederickcarole521@gmail.com](mailto:frederickcarole521@gmail.com).

### **OPEN SITES**

Stevensville and  
Kirwan House

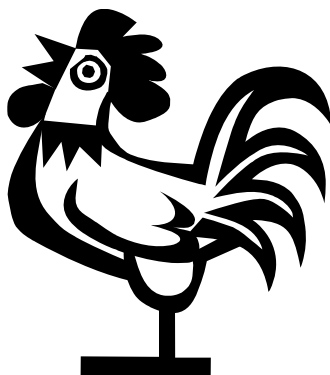
1st Saturday of every month

Noon to 4:00pm  
Through October

— *Save the Dates* —

## *Annual Fall Picnic*

Sunday, September 22, 2019  
Kirwan House and Farm, 1:00pm



# *An Old Fashioned Picnic*

*For Kent Island Heritage Society Members and Guests*

*The Kirwan House and Farm*

*Sunday, September 22, 2019*

*1:00 - 5:00*

## ***Bring a Covered Dish to Share***

The Society will provide

Fried Chicken, Hot Dogs, Iced Tea, Lemonade, Coffee

And don't forget Homemade Ice Cream

Bring a ***lawn chair*** for comfort and join us for

hayrides, corn hole, chickens to feed, good conversation, games, displays

**+ a 50/50 Raffle**

RSVP: by September 18 (*include information on form below when emailing or calling*)

Email: [frederickcarole521@gmail.com](mailto:frederickcarole521@gmail.com)

**Or you may** mail this form to: Carole Frederick, 521 Love Point Road, Stevensville, MD 21666

✂ ~~~~~

Name \_\_\_\_\_

We would love to attend the heritage society picnic and will have  
the following number of people in our party:

Your phone # \_\_\_\_\_ (*in case of inclement weather*)

No. of Adults \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Children \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of Children \_\_\_\_\_  
(*for game planning*)

\_\_\_\_\_

Names of everyone attending in your party



# THE KIRWAN BLACKSMITH SHOP

*By Jack Broderick*

In Longfellow's poem it was "Under the spreading chestnut tree". On the Kirwan Farm it is under the spreading cherry tree – our Blacksmith Shop. We finally broke ground on August 6, after years of dreaming, discussing, planning, drawing, and waiting. This groundbreaking was especially exhilarating for some of our members: Mike Bouchall, resident blacksmith; Nancy Cook, past president and current secretary; and Yours Truly, president.

In collaboration with Mike Bouchall and contractor, Tom Willey, we sketched out a rough plan. We then engaged local architect, Ray Strang, who provided his services pro-bono. Linda Collier, Kirwan House curator, provided historical information regarding the structure and finally we received approval from the county; thus the dream became reality.

The blacksmith shop was one of many successful enterprises of Senator James Kirwan. In addition, on his farm, he had a schooner landing, sawmill, cooperage (barrel making shop), and a brick kiln that no longer exist. A few of the old outbuildings are still standing such as the dairy, icehouse, tool shed, and a distant barn.

It is our hope that the blacksmith shop, being recreated where it once stood will serve as a reminder of the many skills and trades that were part of life on Kent Island. Soon the sights, sounds, and smells of the "Smithy" will help bring another part of our Kent Island Heritage to life. We hope you will enjoy it!



Yancy Sewell  
digging footers for  
the Blacksmith Shop



## 1918-1919 Influenza on Kent Island

*by John Conley*

Up to 50 million people worldwide died from the Influenza of 1918, sometimes called the Spanish Flu. That flu strain first showed up in the United States in the spring of 1918 and lasted until the end of 1919, with an estimated 675,000 deaths in this country.

Kent Island was not spared by the H1N1 virus. According to the KIHS Publication Burial Permits Kent Island 1900-1922, influenza was the cause of seven deaths on Kent Island, the first occurring in October 1918 and the last in February 1919. The age range of the deceased was from a baby of just one hour to a 32 year old man. It is possible that there were more Kent Island deaths from influenza since 10 deaths from February to October 1918 were attributed to some form of pneumonia. Of those 10 deaths, only three were to people over age 30. The influenza was considered unique in that its greatest impact was on young healthy people.

Most of the influenza death certificates were signed by Frank Thomas Jr. who was an undertaker in Stevensville and Sub Registrar for the local Board of Health. His business was next door to historic Christ Church in Stevensville. When not dealing with dead bodies. Mr. Thomas also transported live ones from Stevensville to the Queen Anne's Railroad Station (located near today's Love Point Park near the Kent Island High School) for ten cents a ride. He also had the Mail Messenger Route from the train station to the Stevensville Post Office.

The Burial Permit publication contains some very interesting Kent Island history and can be purchased for \$10 at our website. [kentislandheritagesociety.org](http://kentislandheritagesociety.org).

# AUTUMN

by Sally Lewis

Vultures have descended  
to the middle of  
the fifteen-acre field  
across the street but  
what they're after  
I can't see from here

For more than a week  
we've watched the  
progress of harvest  
– the stately, enormous  
combine consuming the corn  
spitting out the stalks,  
liming, weed killing, harrowing

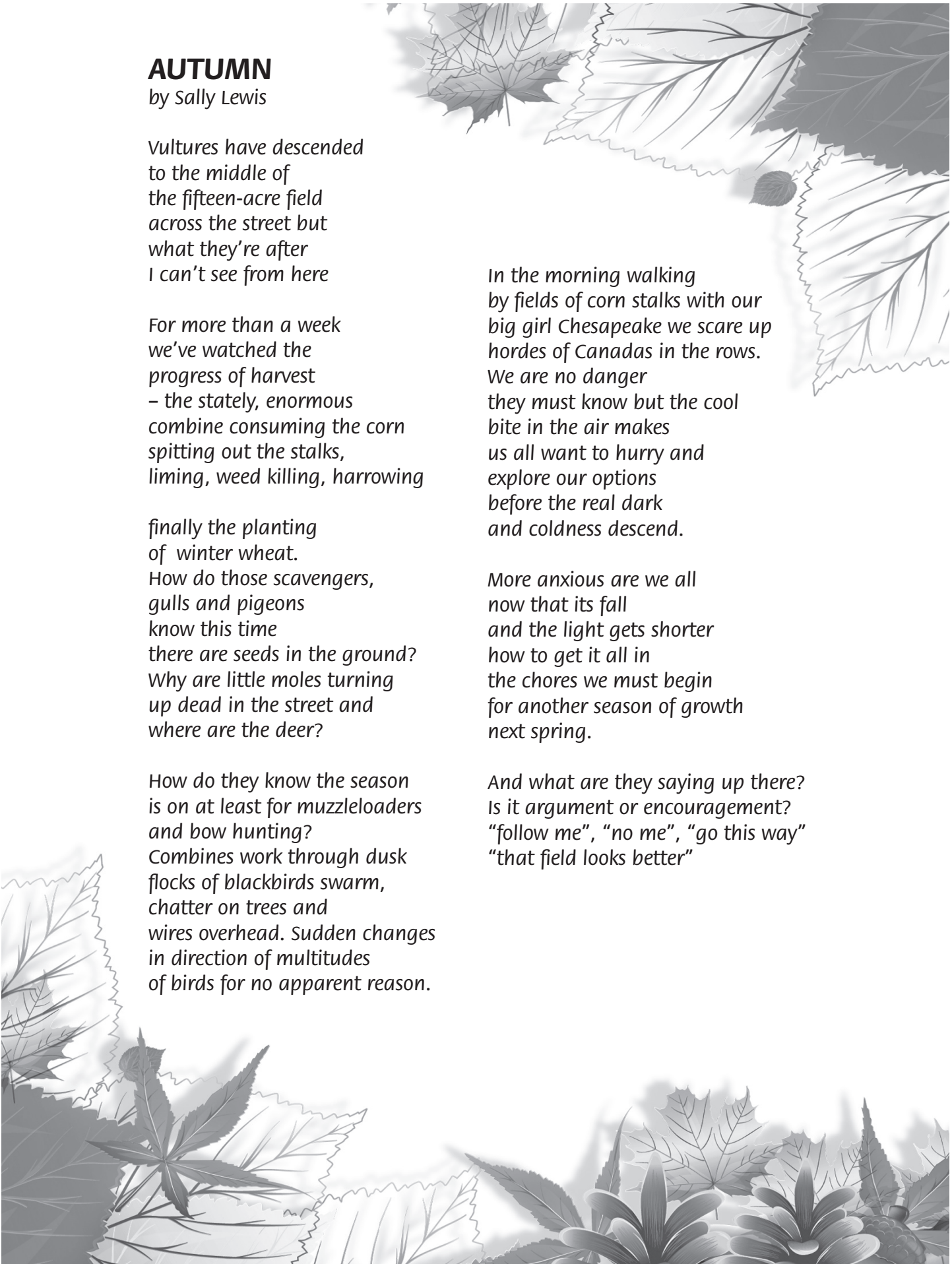
finally the planting  
of winter wheat.  
How do those scavengers,  
gulls and pigeons  
know this time  
there are seeds in the ground?  
Why are little moles turning  
up dead in the street and  
where are the deer?

How do they know the season  
is on at least for muzzleloaders  
and bow hunting?  
Combines work through dusk  
flocks of blackbirds swarm,  
chatter on trees and  
wires overhead. Sudden changes  
in direction of multitudes  
of birds for no apparent reason.

In the morning walking  
by fields of corn stalks with our  
big girl Chesapeake we scare up  
hordes of Canadas in the rows.  
We are no danger  
they must know but the cool  
bite in the air makes  
us all want to hurry and  
explore our options  
before the real dark  
and coldness descend.

More anxious are we all  
now that its fall  
and the light gets shorter  
how to get it all in  
the chores we must begin  
for another season of growth  
next spring.

And what are they saying up there?  
Is it argument or encouragement?  
"follow me", "no me", "go this way"  
"that field looks better"



## Welcome New Members

Christina Dorset  
Fred G. Garrison  
Daniel Harding  
Donna Hoyt  
Allen L. Ingling, Jr  
Hanna Kapadia  
Meaghan Kline  
Ericka Kriegisch & family  
Lacey Phelps  
Thomas Robbins  
Suellen Bryan Hopkins Ruby  
John Schrencongost  
Lynn Snyder  
Anne K. Tyler  
Cheryl and Kenneth Valentine  
Christine Walters  
Christine West



Visit the Old Post Office in Downtown Stevensville  
for this and many other localized gifts

## Welcome New Businesses

Four Seasons at  
Kent Island

Lundberg Builders

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Enclosed is a check to cover dues for the membership indicated below:

- ☐ Individual Life Membership \$250.00  
☐ Organization Membership \$40.00  
☐ Business Membership \$50.00

- ☐ Single Membership \$15.00  
☐ Family Membership \$25.00

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_

(Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

*Dues and contributions are tax  
deductible to the fullest extent of the law.*

**Membership period:**  
**January 1 to December 31**

**The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc**  
**P.O. Box 321, Stevensville, Maryland**  
**[www.kentislandheritagesociety.org](http://www.kentislandheritagesociety.org)**

Your Interests:

History \_\_\_\_\_ Genealogy \_\_\_\_\_ Photography \_\_\_\_\_

Docent Program \_\_\_\_\_ Property Maintenance \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interest \_\_\_\_\_

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