

Isle of Kent - 1631

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

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. ■ SPRING 2008

President's Message

IT'S BEEN A CHALLENGING but rewarding first quarter for the Kent Island Heritage Society. Ms. Nancy Cook has been most helpful in our leadership transition, preferring to remain behind the scenes but providing timely and effective mentoring. Talk about a team . . . the teamwork of our board members and many volunteer Society members has been impressive:

★ In March we enjoyed a membership meeting that featured Jack Shaum (author, Bay Times reporter, former radio announcer and steamboat buff). Jack treated us to a fascinating talk and slide-show on old steamboats and resorts of the Bay. Billy Baxter added some local color

by bringing a beautiful glazed ceramic pitcher in immaculate condition he had dredged up from an old steamboat wreck while clamming off the Island.

★ In April our dedicated group of docents came together under Audrey Hawkins' leadership for the annual Docents Tea, a beautiful early spring event at the Historic Stevensville home of Bill and Janet Denny. Thanks for this great start to the docent season.



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Kirwan Country Store Museum Grand Reopening

In a May 3 ribbon-cutting ceremony, a fully restored and much improved Kirwan Country Store Museum reopened its doors to visitors. A water pipe had frozen and burst on a cold February night last year, inundating the store below and severely damaging some of its contents.

Kirwan House Conservator Lora Lake cut the ribbon and Society President Jack Broderick welcomed the assembled gathering, much reduced in size because of the funeral of Rev. Roy Phillips, highly revered minister of Kent Island Methodist Church. [See tribute on page 6.]

Regretfully, Conservator Linda Collier was tending to her husband, Butch, who had just been hospitalized for an emergency issue. He recovered, however, in time to chauffeur Linda and Lora in the Kent Island Day parade.

Linda, Lora and a host of other dedicated volunteers labored long and hard to rescue and restore the severely water-damaged artifacts now on display.

Guests toasted the reopening with Le Rosé de Kirwan, a 2006 Bordeaux, and Coca-Cola in vintage bottles. [See photos on page 3.]

Mark Your Calendar

Kent Island Heritage Society QUARTERLY EVENT

Thursday, June 18, 7 p.m.
Kent Island Library

*Join us on a bus tour
of KIHS properties*

❶ Cray House ❷ Train Station ❸ Post
Office ❹ Bank ❺ Kirwan House

Refreshments served at Kirwan House

President

Jack Broderick

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Dan Hopkins

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Carole Frederick

Recording Secretary

Flora Sossi

Treasurer

Audrey Hawkins
Wayne Morris

Joel Berger

Myrtle Bruscup

Butch Collier

Bill Denny III

Florence Dunn

Toni Gibson

John Gibson Jr.

Kerry Lake

Jean Leathery

Brent Lewis

Lynne Riley-Coleman

Gary Walters

Hal Wilson

Joyce Woodford

President's Message

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Docents

Audrey Hawkins
Kent Island Day
Flora Sossi
Jack Broderick
Toni Gibson
Gary Walters
Joyce Woodward

Programs

Jack Broderick
Kirwan Property

Joel Berger
Bill Denny
Dan Hopkins
Wayne Morris

Kirwan Interior

Midge Kirwan
Myrtle Bruscup
Linda Collier
Lora Lake
Jane Sparks
Emma Thomas

Cray House

Bill Denny
Barbara Marmion
Old Stevensville P.O.

Francis Collier
Train Depot
Florence Dunn
Gil Dunn

Caboose Restoration

Richard Dadds
Oral Histories

Brent Lewis
Nominating

Jack Broderick
Membership

Mae Hutchison
Library Files

Myrtle Bruscup
Mary White

Audit

Lynn Riley-Coleman

Scholarship

Jane Sparks

Social

Janet Denny
Cemetery Identification & Preservation

Lora Lake

Editor

John Bonner
Farmers Market
Laura Keene

☆ On May 3 we celebrated the grand reopening of the Kirwan General Store Museum. Thanks to the painstaking efforts led by Lora Lake and Linda Collier, our Kirwan conservators, and the help of many volunteers, the numerous irreplaceable items damaged when frozen water pipes burst in February '07 were restored. We also received invaluable professional assistance from Amanda Apple, QA County's heritage coordinator. The museum has been beautifully refurbished, including modern climate control, to look even better than before. We reopened with flair — some words of thanks, a ribbon cutting, a few old-time refreshments, and a toast with Kirwan Wine. I think Senator James Kirwan, "The Grand Old Man of Kent Island," would have been proud. As would his granddaughter, Miss Katherine, who generously bequeathed the Kirwan property to KIHS to insure that it remains a permanent part of Kent Island's heritage. [See event photos on page 3.]

☆ Two weeks later on May 17 we celebrated Kent Island Day in Historic Stevensville. With our colorful parade and great mix of crafts, historic displays, open historic sites, food vendors, great entertainment, and good ol' family fun, it was a great day. Check out the photo spread on pages 4 and 5. Thanks to Flora Sossi and her crackerjack KI Day Team of Joyce Woodford, Gary Walters and Toni Gibson, KI Day was as sparkling and memorable as the weather that day.

Also on KI Day we announced the winners in each category of our special KI Flag Contest. The grand winner will be announced at the County's Fourth of July celebration at the Narrows. You can see these creative flags here in our newsletter. Congratulations to the category winners, whose names and entries you will find on page 8.

Meanwhile, back at the farm, we're putting the finishing touches on the 60 acres of conservation lands we've established, in partnership with Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, Inc., to help reduce run-off into Kirwans Creek and to attract wildlife. We still have more than 150 acres of leased farming operations.

Further, VP Dan Hopkins is leading a committee to explore new heritage activities such as gardens, orchard, trails, overlooks to help open the Kirwan Farm for KIHS members and visitors to enjoy. We also enjoy a longstanding partnership with the

gifted women of the Kent Island Garden Club who do so much to help provide natural, growing beauty at the Kirwan House and at all our KIHS historic sites.

We look forward to continuing an active year with a variety of activities. Our June 18 membership meeting will feature a special bus tour of our KIHS historic sites. Beginning at the KI Library, touching all our sites in Stevensville, and including refreshments at the Kirwan Store Museum. We hope you'll join us.

In September we will again host the Fall Harvest Picnic for our members at the Kirwan place, and in December we will welcome our members for a Victorian Christmas.

Two other activities we are supporting include a new Saturday Farmers' Market starting in June on the Cray House Green in Stevensville and the creation of the Kent Island Arts and Entertainment District in Stevensville. Check the *Bay Times* for details.

I also want to mention the recent passing of two beloved Kent Islanders and friends, Rev. Roy Phillips and Capt. Billy Baxter. We will miss them. A touching tribute to both by Brent Lewis is in this newsletter.

Thank you to all who are playing a role in building the dynamic teamwork we are seeing in the Kent Island Heritage Society. Your efforts are a fitting tribute to this wonderful place we call Kent Island.

Jack Broderick

KIHS Goals for 2008

1. Successful leadership transition.
2. Effective public relations/community outreach.
3. Reopen Kirwan House Museum.
4. Kirwan farm
 - Complete conservation projects.
 - Initiate Heritage Farm Projects.
5. Increase attendance at general meetings.
6. Increase membership, including youth.

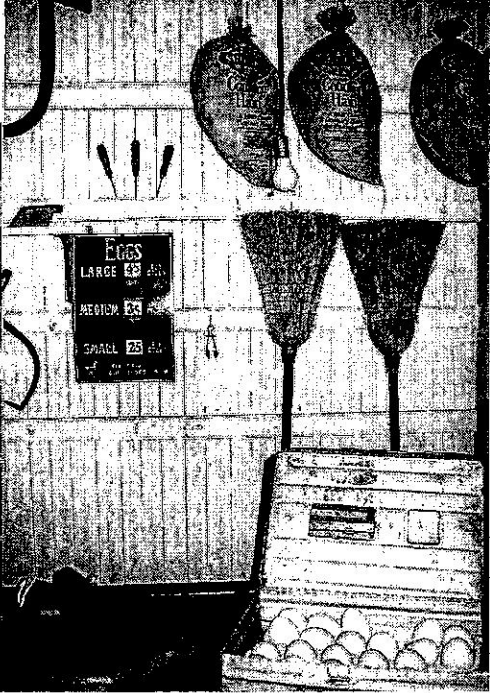
KIHS Sponsors Farmers Market

In keeping with the current initiative to "save our planet by buying local," a new Farmers Market featuring fresh, locally-grown vegetables, fruit, herbs, nuts, flowers and plants; home-baked goods; soaps and craft items will be located in Historic Stevensville adjacent to Cray House. The market will be open Saturdays from 9 to noon, from June 7 through the end of August.

Interested vendors should contact Laura Keene at 410-643-6201 or (cell) 410-829-6280. Space rental fees will help support KIHS programs and operations.

KIRWAN COUNTRY STORE MUSEUM GRAND REOPENING

Photos by Doug Bishop, The Bay Times, and Jean Leathery, KHS





Kent Island Day 2008

Photos by Jean Leathery
Doug Bishop, Bay Times
John Bonner



*In the midst of a season that celebrates life and rebirth,
Kent Islanders recently lost two prominent members of our community.*

REVEREND ROY PHILLIPS, a cornerstone of the Island's spiritual foundation, passed away on the last day of April.

Roy B. Phillips was born 80 years ago in Delaware. After high school, a stint in the Army, and a 1947 wedding to Thelma Whaley, Roy soon was moved to follow his calling and entered the ministry. Early church appointments carried the young Phillips family around Maryland and Delaware, and included four years of service in Rock Hall. In 1961, the Phillipses came to Kent Island where three different United Methodist churches were in the early stages of merging. For 18 years Rev. Phillips ministered to what was now a truly united congregation. A congregation that has grown and led the community by gleaming example.

When he retired in 1990, Rev. Phillips and Thelma moved back from Cambridge to the island, and the people, they loved.

The lives he touched are innumerable. In the midst of troubling times his was the calm voice of faith. Extremely educated and eloquent, Rev. Phillips carried his gifts with a friendly smile and a humble nature. He enjoyed the company of all people, be they pillars of the church or Kent Island characters of ornery reputation.

Among his honors, Rev. Phillips was a life member of the Kent Island Volunteer Fire Company and chaplain of the Hospice of Queen Anne's, Inc. A family man and an enthusiastic, accomplished traveler, Rev. Roy Phillips is an integral part of Kent Island's history.

As is BILLY BAXTER. An island native, everybody around here knew him as Billy B.

He was born in Chester in 1934. Graduated from the old Stevensville High School and served in the National Guard before marrying his true love, Patricia Ellen Norbeck in 1961, who passed away three years ago. A lifelong waterman, his interests and depth of knowledge about any number of subjects discredits the stereotypical aspersions those who don't know better cast towards people who follow their heart to make a living out there on the waters of the Chesapeake Bay.

Not only was he a self-taught musician and published poet, Billy B was a historian of considerable talent, and his area of expertise was Kent Island's early days. He had extensively studied our pre-colonial heritage and kept facts and figures about our earliest recorded history in his head. There are few academics who could match Billy B in his understanding of how we came to be here.

His years on the water brought him treasure of many different kinds. He raised a family on what he could catch and bring to market. He literally dug up a collection of Indian artifacts that rival those in many prestigious museums. His book of poetry is called Poems of the Chesapeake.

Like the bay, it's always a mistake to judge a person by what you think you see on the surface. Billy died on May 15th.

Though we've lost these two great friends of the Kent Island Heritage Society, we can still honor and celebrate their lives of by making sure we remember the accomplishments and contributions of the men and women who have shared and influenced our heritage.

Your society works hard to try and do just that.

—Brent Lewis

THE QUEEN ANNE RAILROAD

By Gil Dunn

The proposal to run a railroad east-west across the upper Delmarva Peninsula was approved by the legislature in Annapolis. The Queen Anne Railroad began operation in 1898.

The trip began in Baltimore at 7 a.m. daily — not by rail, but by steamboat across the upper Chesapeake Bay to dock at the Queenstown Creek pier. There, passengers and cargo were transferred onto the train to continue the trip to Lewes, Delaware, the eastern terminus of the train line. Lewes was but a short distance across the Delaware Bay by steamboat from the popular resort city of Cape May, New Jersey, on

the illustrious shore of the Atlantic. The trip back arrived in Baltimore at 10 p.m.

This daily schedule was maintained for several years. But winter ice on Queenstown Creek proved troublesome, resulting in the western terminus being moved from Queenstown to Love Point, the northern most area on Kent Island. Thirteen miles of track were laid, and a rail bridge over Kent Narrows was constructed. Love Point became the western terminus of the Queen Anne Railroad.

Kent Island residents, particularly the farmers, were happy to now be served by the railroad. The train's first stop after leaving Love Point

was Stevensville, which became a hub of activity. The train brought the daily newspaper from Baltimore, the U.S. mail, and manufactured goods from Baltimore. This was a great bonus for the merchants of Kent Island and also the residents of the surrounding area.

The daily runs of the train lasted 50 years. Then, the death bell sounded for the railroad . . . the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in 1952 brought the end to the railroad.

Sadly for many, the Stevensville station sat idle. A family lived in it for a short time. Then there was talk of destroying the old station. But before that could

happen, a large corporation graciously moved the station to its present site at no charge. A great gift!!!

The station was restored and today is one of the places for the traveling tourist to visit. The old Stevensville train station is the only remaining station of the original Queen Anne Railroad. The Kent Island Heritage Society lists it as one of the historic places to visit.

All aboard!

The intervention of the indefatigable Gil Dunn was instrumental in preserving this important piece of Kent Island's history and heritage.
—Ed.

Lost

By Alex Johnson

Grandma told me the story when she was in her nineties. She got lost on her own farm when she was about my age now.

Grandma had a pet, a big Rhode Island rooster everybody called Big Red.

Big Red had a cock crow on him that would "wake the town and all the country round."

Uncle Elmer had moved the hen house a good ¾ mile out, so as to get some sleep past 5 a.m.

On the morning of Grandma's first missing day Big Red never let out a crow; not the second day, neither. In all the excitement and misery nobody noticed.

On the third afternoon along about 2 Big Red cut loose. Nobody had ever heard him except in the am, real early. Today was different. He crowed two

hours straight.

Along about 4 when the searchers had all come in for dinner and the night was starting to lower, Aunt Rachel looked out a back window and saw Grandma struggling out of the woods and up the path from the barn. Elmer ran down and got her, carried her into the kitchen and covered her with blankets by the stove.

After hot tea and crackers she said she was fine.

Grandma had been sleeping under tree branches and dreaming about Big Red. She woke up and found out "it weren't no dream". She followed the sound on in until she cut across a path she knew. Of course, she blamed it all on the Almanac.

Everything got back to normal then with Big Red waking the countryside at his usual time.

But one morning a few years later Elmer slept late. No crow from the hen house.

Big Red was gone.

Cousin Jo said he might of got run over on one them dusty roads out there. Elmer said a fox might have took him. Look for a fox with his

KI Garden Club Flower Show

The Kent Island Garden Club is presenting a flower show on Thursday, June 12, from 1 to 4 p.m., at the new Kent Island Volunteer Fire Department Hall. Along with floral designs and horticulture exhibits, there will be three special exhibits.

One special exhibit is of items from the Kirwan Store Museum. Another is of the Cray House herb garden. The third is of the club's new "Let Freedom Ring" garden at the firehouse.

The show is open to the public at no charge.

The Garden Club is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and enjoys a close and rewarding relationship with The Heritage Society.

eyes all scratched out.

But Grandma said he probably wandered off into the woods, got lost, and just never came home.

Thanks to All Who Supported Kent Island Day

Thanks to everyone, especially our Docents and KHS members, who contributed in either hours spent or goods provided to the success of this year's Kent Island Day event. The number of visitors to the Historic Sites was at an all-time high. Thank you also to the artisans who demonstrated their special skills. The parade and the entertainment as always were wonderful additions to the day's events. The entries in the Flag contest were a tribute to how Kent Islanders see the history and culture of Kent Island in today's times. Christia Carlucci was truly inspiring singing the National Anthem.

The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.
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Create A Flag Contest

Sponsored by
The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.

Front row: John Dadds, Jessica Stone,
Jordan Gomez, Julia Glenn;
Top row: Toni Gibson, Jack Broderick



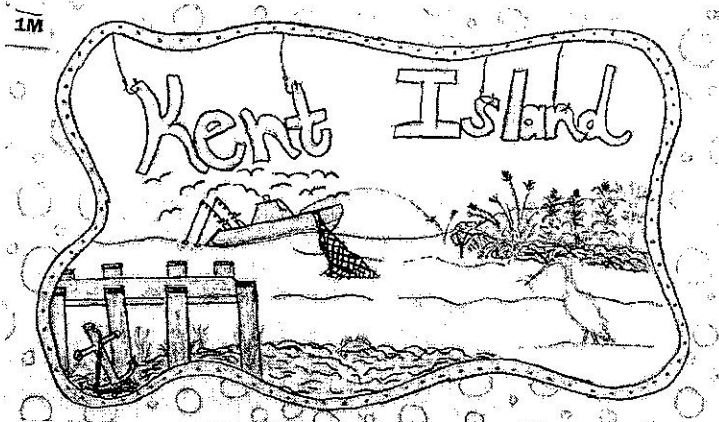
Elementary School Winner, Jordan Gomez, 1st grade



High School Winner, Julia Glenn, 9th grade



Middle School Winner, Jessica Stone, 6th grade



Adult Winner, John Dadds

