

Ile of Kent - 1631

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

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. ■ WINTER 2009
www.kentislandheritagesociety.com

OFFICERS

President
Jack Broderick

Vice President
Dan Hopkins

Corresponding Secretary
Carole Frederick

Recording Secretary
Peggy Walbert

Treasurer
Audrey Hawkins
Wayne Morris

DIRECTORS

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
Nancy Sadler
Gary Walters
Hal Wilson
Joyce Woodford

President's Message

WELCOME TO OUR NEW YEAR; 2009 promises to be a time of hope and renewal for many in our nation. We certainly hope so for Kent Island.

In our last newsletter we emphasized the special team of people — officers, board members, and volunteers — who bring so much talent and energy to this Society. It was in the same spirit of gratitude and recognition that we celebrated our annual holiday dinner and held our elections in December. We presented several special awards. **Flora Sossi**, who was leaving the board after serving years as our recording secretary and as our Kent Island Day Coordinator, was honored with a plaque. *Thank you, Flora.* **Brent Lewis**, also leaving the board, was honored for his years of service. However, Brent will continue to oversee our growing oral histories project, while he dives headlong into his challenging book writing project. Brent's new book, a definitive history of Kent Island, is due out in time for Kent Island Day. Brent was also our guest speaker as he shared the experience of his book writing venture. *Good luck, Brent!*

Also in December, we honored our past president, **Nancy Cook**, whose timeless legacy will be felt for years in the Kent Island Heritage Society. In addition to her continuing support to the Society,

Continued on page 2

Farmers Market Plans New Season

"We want to revive Stevensville to the way it was in the good old days," exclaims Laura Keene, the indomitable spirit behind the new Farmers Market at Cray House Green. "We are looking for all creative people in the area," she says. "Not only are we seeking more freshly-picked-at-the-peak-of-ripeness produce from local farmers, but especially honey from beekeepers, candle makers, nursery plants, anything handmade or baked."

"Artists are welcome. High school students are welcome. Kids who want to sell such wares as hot dogs, lemonade and snow cones are welcome," she adds. New signage is being made to direct customers to this new center of activity.

The Farmers Market will be open on Saturdays from 9 to noon, starting June 20. Space rental is \$12 a day. Proceeds go to The Kent Island Heritage Society to help support its activities. KIHS members are requested to pass this information along to contacts they think may be interested in participating.

For information, call Laura Keene at 410-829-6280.

Mark Your Calendar

Kent Island Heritage Society Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, March 11
Kent Island Library

7:00 p.m. Refreshments
7:30 p.m. Program

NICK HOXTER

Kent Island author and historian
"Celebrating Matapeake"

*In anticipation of the Grand Opening and
Dedication of the Old Matapeake Clubhouse
in late April.*

DOCENTS

•Audrey Hawkins •Joyce Woodward •Joanne Anderson •Myrtle Bruscup •Francis & Linda Collier •Nancy Cook •Dick & Eileen Dadds •Bill & Janet Denny •Gil & Florence Dunn •Carole Frederick •Jay & Toni Gibson •Chris Kilian •Kerry & Lora Lake •David & Jean Leathery •Geo. & Barbara Marmion •Fran Peters •Louise Price •Flora Sossi •Joan Stoor •Fran Taylor •Hanna Wall

KENT ISLAND DAY

•Joyce Woodward •Toni Gibson •Gary Walters

KIRWAN PROPERTY

•Joel Berger •Bill Denny •Dan Hopkins •Wayne Morris •Hal Wilson

KIRWAN INTERIOR

Midge Kirwan •Myrtle Bruscup •Jane Sparks •Emma Thomas

KIRWAN STORE MUSEUM

•Linda Collier, Curator •Lora Lake, Curator

CRAY HOUSE

•Bill Denny •Barbara Marmion

STEVENSVILLE P.O.

•Francis Collier

TRAIN DEPOT

•Florence & Gil Dunn

CABOOSE RESTORATION

•Nancy Cook •Richard Dadds •T. & Wayne Humphries

STEVENSVILLE BANK

•Bill Denny •Jay Gibson

ORAL HISTORIES

•Brent Lewis

MEMBERSHIP

•Mae Hutchison

LIBRARY FILES

•Myrtle Bruscup •Mary White

AUDIT

•Lynn Riley-Coleman •Jane Sparks

QAC HISTORIC SITES

•Nancy Cook, Coordinator

DEVELOPMENT

•Kerry Lake •Hal Wilson

CEMETERY ID & PRESERVATION

•Lora Lake

FARMERS MARKET

•Laura Keene

WEBSITE

•Carol Frederick

•John Bonner

PUBLIC RELATIONS

•John Bonner, Editor

President's Message

Continued from page 1

Nancy has poured her energy into rescuing the Countywide Historic Sites Consortium, after the Commissioners withdrew government support last year. Nancy has succeeded in regaining County support including a modest budget to continue marketing and advertising of our rich historic resources. *Thank you, Nancy.*

We also gave special recognition to two veteran Society members, **Gil Dunn** and **Audrey Hawkins**: both past presidents, both celebrating their ninetieth birthday, both still going strong, both a unique part of Kent Island's heritage! Congratulations! Check out the pictures on page 4 of the holiday celebration.

As we look forward to the coming year, we welcome two new board members, recording secretary, **Peggy Walbert** of Bennett's Point, and board member **Nancy Sadler** of Historic Stevensville. We will share bio highlights of Peg and Nancy in a future newsletter.

This year we plan to carry on the traditions of celebrating our heritage as we did last year. Our upcoming 2009 events are listed on page 5. Several highlights include the general membership meeting on March 11, at 7:00 p.m. at the Kent Island Library [See page 1 meeting box.]. Nick Hoxter, famous Kent Island author and historian (and good friend) will speak on Celebrating Matapeake: a tribute to the role that Matapeake played in the Island's heritage — the ferry, the landing, the renowned clubhouse. This spring on April 25, the County will dedicate and reopen that famous landmark, the Matapeake Clubhouse. Nick will help set the stage for this important event and share his personal memories of Matapeake.

On May 16, we will celebrate Kent Island Day in Historic Stevensville, with the parade, music, demonstrations, arts and crafts, good food, fun and friendship. And yes, the historic re-enactors will be there on the Green with their muskets and cannons! Hope you and your family plan to be there to celebrate Kent Island.

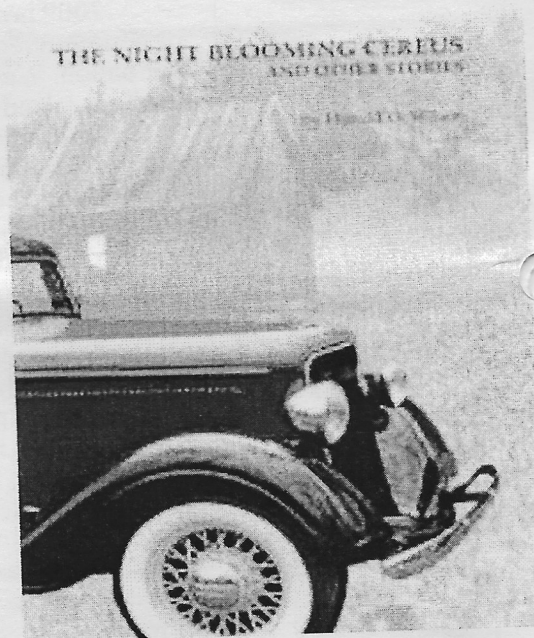
After Kent Island Day, **Laura Keene** will again be overseeing the Kent Island Farmers Market in Stevensville, every summer Saturday beginning June 20. And of course, all of our heritage sites are open every first Saturday, May through October, noon to 4:00 p.m.

We continue to work to upgrade and improve our sites with the right touch of cleaning and maintenance. If you would

like to help with this interesting effort, see our article on volunteering on page 6, and consider giving us a call. We are also continuing our commitment to manage the Kirwan Farm in a responsible, Bay-friendly fashion, following the philosophy that preserving our heritage and good land stewardship go hand in hand. See article on page 3 about our impressive conservation project and ride by the Farm on Dominion Road to check out our work. Also see **Hal Wilson's** companion article about the new butterfly garden at Kirwan.

We look forward to seeing you this year at one of our great upcoming events or at one of our heritage sites.

Jack Broderick



Author and Kent Island Heritage Society board member Hal Wilson's acclaimed new book, *The Night Blooming Cereus and Other Short Stories* (and a novella), is now available at local book stores.

The Wye Parish is hosting a book signing at St. Luke's Chapel in Queenstown on March 6 from 3 to 5 p.m. He will be speaking at the "Reading Just for Fun" book club at Symphony Village in Centreville on March 17 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Check Hal's Website, www.haroldowilson.com for other scheduled book signings in Annapolis and other places.

Major Conservation Project Completed at Kirwan Farm

Heritage Preservation and Good Land Stewardship a Great Combination

It started with Ned Gerber, Wildlife Biologist and Executive Director of Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, who frequently drove by The Heritage Society's Kirwan Farm and watched the muddy runoff from heavy rains breaching the highway and running into Kirwan Creek.

Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating, restoring, and protecting wildlife habitat and establishing more sustainable agriculture. Ned was also serving as a board member of the Kent Island Heritage Society. His concern was shared by many of the Society's board members.

It was a natural partnership. The Heritage Society and CWH had worked together for several years to preserve several areas of the farm bordering both Kirwan's Creek and Crab Alley Creek. Those lands were successfully enrolled in the USDA's Cropland Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

To control the erosion on the lower end of the farm, an agreement was reached to partner on a creative solution. The plan which emerged included the creation of two new wetland areas with berms and spillways to slowly release water into the creek and the planting of riparian buffers in native grasses, wildflowers, trees and shrubs to enhance biodiversity, provide habitat for shorebirds, amphibians and waterfowl, and to further improve water quality. That plan has been brought to completion over the past year.

The larger of the two wetland areas traps about 20 acres of runoff on the lower, open field area of the farm. The small one, located closer to Kirwan House, is one acre in size with a 10 acre drainage area. It is more of a wooded-type wetland to complement the 35 acres of trees and 14 acres of grasses that CWH planted there several years ago.

The farm's most productive acre-

age with the best soils remain in agricultural cropland. This now represents a far better balance among the competing requirements of agriculture, wildlife and water quality.

The Queen Anne's County Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency provided assistance to enroll the Kirwan Farm in the CREP program, which has provided \$30,000 in funding; a grant from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources provided \$15,000; and CWH provided the remaining \$5,000 required for this project.

As he looked out recently over the new wetland full of wintering geese, Dan Hopkins, KIHS vice president who has coordinated the project, commented, "Our Heritage Society has a special obligation to be good stewards of this land and to enhance and preserve this special place for future generations. It's good for the Island and good for the Bay."

New Butterfly Garden for Kirwan House

By Harold Wilson

More than 151 species of butterflies are found around the world. Of these, more than 129 species regularly occur in Maryland, and many of those are found on the Eastern Shore. To attract these delicate lepidoptera to the grounds of the Kirwan House, the Kent Island Heritage Society will establish a butterfly garden this spring.

The Garden will be just east of the small stand of holly and dogwood trees behind the house. Butterfly-attracting plants such as whorled coreopsis, blackeyed susan, cardinal flower, joe pye weed, and

native azalea, along with a number of others will be arranged in an attractive garden setting. A list of all the plants proposed is in the accompanying box.

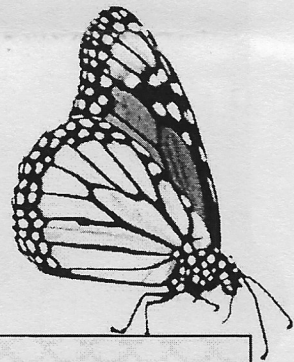
The purpose of the garden is not only to beautify the grounds but to offer an educational venue where children can appreciate the colorful finery of these "scale wing" creatures, mark their species, and identify the plants that support them.

And there is another purpose. Because of their great beauty, their delicate structure and strange stages of development, butterflies have been celebrated in the mythology of cultures from the Greeks of antiquity to

the Native American bands of the Northwest. For these reasons butterflies strike a deep and sympathetic cord in us as well.

In response to the Garden idea, a number of people have asked if they can make a contribution to the Garden in honor of a friend or deceased loved one. The answer is certainly, "yes."

The Heritage Society will establish a book of remembrance for those making gifts for the development and tending of the Garden. If you would like more information about the Garden or to make a gift in honor of someone close to you, please contact Dan Hopkins.



List of Plants

- * Bee Balm
- * Swamp Milkweed
- * Whorled Coreopsis
- * Butterfly Weed
- * Blackeyed Susan
- * New England Aster
- * Blazing Star
- * Cardinal Flower
- * New York Ironweed
- * Joe Pye Weed
- * Columbine
- * Buttonbush
- * Pawpaw
- * Meadow Sweet
- * Native Azalea



Annual Meeting, Election and Dinner

Kent Island Yacht Club, December 13, 2008

Photos by Doug Bishop, The Bay Times and Jean Leathery, Isle of Kent



Photo by Chris Polk, The Bay Times

At a ceremony on Nov. 18 in Oxford, Maryland, the Eastern Shore Heritage Inc. recognized nine individuals and organizations for their distinguished contributions to Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area. Curators Linda Collier and Lora Lake accepted the 2008 New Heritage Initiative Award for leading the effort to restore and reopen the James E. Kirwan Store Museum.

Welcome New Members

Kevin Beck Stevensville, Md.	Kirwan Landing Community Assn. Chester, Md.
Louis Crouch Long Valley, N.J.	Candace K. Long Salem, Va.
Ellen Edwards Stevensville, Md.	Sandra Reinhard Stevensville, Md.
Ron and Sandy Frederick Stevensville, Md.	Joshua Willis Chester, Md.

Calendar of Events

- ☐ **March 11**
General Meeting
Kent Island Library
- ☐ **May 16**
Kent Island Day
Historic District
- ☐ **June 10**
General Meeting and
bus tour of KIHS sites
- ☐ **September 20**
Fall Heritage Picnic
Kirwan Farm
- ☐ **December 12**
Annual Meeting

Erin Kelley Awarded KIHS 2008 Scholarship



Erin Kelley is 2008 winner of The Kent Island Heritage Society's \$1,000 annual scholarship award for graduates of Kent Island High School. Her parents are David A. Kelley and Claire Coursey. Her Kent Island roots are through her maternal grandparents, Captain Mike and Virginia Coursey.

Erin currently is taking classes at Chesapeake College. "I feel starting small and close to home is a beneficial way to get my feet wet," she explains. She plans to earn an associates degree and then transfer to a four-year college to pursue speech pathology with a minor in performing arts.

"I truly appreciate this opportunity and feel it is an honor to be awarded such a prestigious and memorable award," she says.

Volunteers Live Longer

So says Alan Wachter, health columnist for The Bay Times in his Feb. 18 column. It's because, he explains, "that makes us feel happy and fulfilled." And, he adds, "That is especially true of *seniors*." [self-serving emphasis added].

Mayo Clinic Women's HealthSource backs up his claim. "Older people who volunteer have lower rates of heart disease and live longer than peers who don't volunteer," it reports.

Indeed. One need look no further for persuasive evidence than the photo on page 4 of the happy, smiling faces of nonagenarian volunteers Audrey Hawkins and Gil Dunn.

Isle of Kent wants to offer you at no cost whatsoever this unique opportunity to grab some of the happiness you, too, deserve. Won't you join the long list of happy, fulfilled volunteers you see listed in the sidebar on page 2?

Alan also claims that volunteering "boosts mental health." If true, his lovely wife Marcie may want to volunteer him for something. You may have someone in mind who needs an attitude adjustment.

OPPORTUNITY ONE

Be a docent. Wear a costume. Pretend you're a person who was

happy to live there long ago. Speak in quaint Kent Island dialect if you like. Scare little kids. It's a hoot. Docents get to go to a great docent's tea in costume and share town gossip. Call Audrey Hawkins at 410-643-5969.



OPPORTUNITY TWO

Be a facilitator at Kent Island Day on May 16. Help do stuff. Hard to tell in advance what that might be. Setting up chairs for spectators at the stage is an example. But never

fear. Someone else has the job of cleaning up after the four-legged parade participants. Call Joyce Woodford 410-643-4189.

OPPORTUNITY THREE

Kneaders needed for Kent Island Day's bake sale table. A pie, a cake, cupcakes, pastry, breads, your baked specialty that people ask for seconds of. Call Myrtle Bruscup at 410-643-5596.

OPPORTUNITY FOUR

Craftsmen of all specialties. You think your house needs a lot of attention? Consider our several hundred years old structures. Something always needs fixing. Horticulturist, landscape architect? Kirwan Farm has challenges galore. Call Jack Broderick at 410-643-6452.

OPPORTUNITY FIVE

The Society's oral history project needs someone with organizational skills to help create a system to catalog and summarize our videos. This would require viewing videos, extracting pithy quotes that provide flavor of interview, and creating summaries that provide a feel for depth and scope. Project should be both interesting and challenging. Do it when you can. No deadlines. Call Brent Lewis at 410-310-8216.

In Memoriam

CAPT. HARRY PORTER

SKIPPER OF YACHTS FOR SIX MARYLAND GOVERNORS, THE *MARYLAND LADY*, THE *MARYLAND INDEPENDENCE* AND THE *AURORA*

The society is very thankful for and will miss the interest and support shown our organization by this member. Continuing our shared mission honors his memory.

Seeking Vintage Waterman's Gear

Dan Hopkins, KIHS vice president, is nearing completion of a 1920s replica Smith Island crab boat, the style that would have been in use around Kent Island. He plans to outfit it with vintage hardware and gear appropriate to that era to trotline, oyster, set eel pots, etc. and use it to pass on some old time watermen's traditions to his son, Sam, and anyone else who's interested.

He's looking for: □ Galvanized boat hand pump (looks like a downspout) □ Oyster tong/nipper heads
□ Crab scrape, small □ Net shuttle

If you know of the availability of such items or of plans for building vintage gear, please call him at 410-643-6744 or email him at hopkinsassociates@verizon.net.

Gone but Not Forgotten

By Gil Dunn

A visit to the restored Stevensville train station is gratifying. The mural on the inside north wall awakens memories in many visitors. The mural is a painting by Liz Bukowsky, a popular and talented local artist. Other murals by Liz can be found throughout our community. The mural in the train station is a skyline view of Baltimore, showing some of the tall buildings of the city, the Pratt Street wharf and the end of the Patapsco

River. One's mind begins to imagine the scene when the mural is studied.

Among the sights are the banana boats and the produce boats docked at the Pratt Street wharf with their products for the Baltimore market and the Old Bay Line building that harbored the steamboats for the long trip to Norfolk and Port Comfort, Virginia. The memory sees the steamboat *Westmorland* discharging the passengers from the city to meet the train, the Queen Anne's Railroad, and completes the trip to the popular ocean

resort of Cape May, New Jersey.

The return trip took Eastern Shore seafood, produce, and many, many peaches, when in season, back to Baltimore. The box cars were full with the bounty of Eastern Shore goods. The mural shows the ferry boat *Philadelphia*, nicknamed "Smokey Joe," and the memories continue. The ferry boat brought the passengers and their cars to Love Point, and then would continue on to further destinations on the Shore.

Memories recall the

glamorous *Bay Belle* that, during the summer months, would make the trip to Seven Foot Knoll and return, with music playing and passengers dancing on the top deck. The excursion trip to Tolchester on the *Louise*, took passengers for a one-day trip to the park.

Today, the Baltimore city dock is known as the Inner Harbor where many changes have been made, and many things are gone. The old timer remembers these times as "the good old days," gone but not forgotten.

Kent Island Blues

By Alex Johnson

Out of the great white ice
Down through dozens of thousands of years
Past sun-stricken flats of mud and pools
Where mastodon and mammoth wade
Past wandering man with axe and flint
Past inlet marsh and dune,
The stream slithers sought to meet the sea
Which begins to warm and rise
Flood fill and push into creek and bight.
Islets rise and lift up stem and stalk
To wait for time
Dawn
Noon
Dusk
Night.

(Here is a four beat pause or rest.)

Kent Island
Called Monoponsan then
Sheltering native Matapeakes and Wicomess
Growing corn bean pumpkin and squash
In peace.
The gull that glides past Romancoke
Saw William Claiborne come
To trade his button-beads for fur
And go.
And then the long light on the land
Of quiet generations

New farms
Old estates
Unchanging
Watched by whitetail canvasback and loon
Rail line and steam ships
The ferry wharves grow old
Skipjacks at the narrows
Bring in oyster crab and rock.

Then came the bridge
Always the bridge
The great gray mother floats
Carrying her own bags forth and back
From Sandy Point to Kent
Imprinting her form not on the water but the land.

Now it's tear down
Old estates and farms goodbye
Reach the beach
And "you want fries with that?"
Condo, townhouse, chain motel.
Any available land
Property rights, defense leagues
Hold on, hold tight,
Old heritage
Now in your ears
The echo of an old lament,
You cannot go home again.

Poet, artist with wood, and Heritage Society
member Alex Johnson lives in Chester.

The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.

Post Office Box No. 321
Stevensville, Maryland 21666

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
Paid
Stevensville, MD
21666
Permit # 11



Philpot's Front Porch

Home Is Where the Hardhead Is

By Skeeter Philpot

I was sitting on the front porch the other evening waiting for T.S. to get home from work. Thanks to Bay Bridge traffic, she was probably less than a mile closer to the tollgate than she was when she called half an hour earlier. Thanks to the invention of the cell phone, I know I was doomed to hear about it at least twice more before she got here.

Dinner was on the stove. One of my specialties: Willy Nilly Chile. Secret recipe. Don't even bother asking.

Sitting there waiting, I thought about another phone call I had that day. A very nice lady that I've spoken to a few times before called to say it was time to schedule a termite inspection. I've never seen her but have a picture of her in my head. We talked for a minute and

she said, "Now, let's see, you live in . . . Annapolis?"

I snickered at the absurdity of that misstatement and corrected her, "Kent Island. I'm an Eastern Shoreman."

"Really?" Her tone was doubtful. "How long?"

"Tenth generation." Her silence couldn't have been more telling than if I'd just told here I was a web-toed, Barbie-doll-collecting nudist wearing a tinfoil dunce cap. (Except for the webbed toes, I'm not.) "Where do you live, Krista?"

"Kent Island. My parents moved here my senior year of high school. Before that I thought 'Eastern Shore' meant Ocean City."

I snickered at that, too. She asked, "You ever live anywhere else?"

"I was in the Navy. Wanted to see the world. Lived in Louisiana for a year once. Loved it for about a

month. But like lots of people who grow up here and leave, I came back. Some stay away years, but most eventually come back."

"After college I'm only coming back here to visit. Same thing with where I grew up. I want to move to California," Krista responded.

We scheduled the appointment for Tuesday and said goodbye. The conversation with Krista made me thankful. I was thankful I'd grown up in a place I could both leave and want to come back to. I was thankful to have people nearby who really care. I was thankful that home was one of the few sure things in the world and that nobody could ever convince me otherwise. I hoped Krista would find a place like home somehow.

I would have thought about it all some more, but

the phone rang again and caller ID identified my wife. Thinking time was over. Listening time was starting. Again.

Skeeter Philpot will accept bribes for his secret recipe for Willy Nilly Chile.

Isle of Kent

John Bonner, Editor

Isle of Kent is published quarterly by The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc., a nonprofit corporation chartered by the State of Maryland, P.O. Box 321, Stevensville, MD 21666. Every effort is made to assure the accuracy of published information, but no responsibility is assumed by The Kent Island Heritage Society Inc. or the editor in the event of claim of loss or damage from any article. Statements attributed to individuals do not necessarily reflect official policy of the KIHS. Send correspondence regarding newsletter to Editor, 324 Columbia Lane, Stevensville, MD 21666. Email: jlbanner@verizon.net