

Isle of Kent - 1631



Newsletter of The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.

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



President's Message

Dear friends of the Kent Island Heritage Society:

This is a special message. Ever since it became public knowledge that Catherine Kirwan left her estate to the Kent Island Heritage Society, many people on Kent Island and in Queen Anne's County believe that our Society has become wealthy. I wish to set this record straight on two counts. The first being what the Society has been going through since it inherited the estate and the second being our attempts to save the farm.

First: The estate of Catherine Kirwan left a life interest unto Walter R. Coppage, which essentially amounted to a right to use the farm and enjoy the income. All costs of the estate and taxes were to be paid by the estate assets, which had the effect of reducing the residuary bequest to the Society. These costs were initially projected to be over \$190,000.00. We were advised that the inheritance tax could be reduced if all parties agreed to keep the property in agricultural use. The representative of Walter R. Coppage would not agree to this commitment, thereby resulting in increased tax costs to the Society of approximately \$40,000.00. We were forced to spend extra money for legal representation to pursue an alternative means to a reduction of the tax. We were successful in achieving this reduction by the Society as the remainder owner, making a pledge to the State that they would keep the property in agricultural use. Even with this reduction, the expenses of the estate have reduced the Society's bequest by approximately \$150,000.00.

Second: The Kent Island Heritage Society was approached

to explore the possibility of selling the farm under the following conditions (which we, the Society, set up):

1. The farm would be retired into easement and transferred to the Maryland Environmental Trust (i.e. It would remain a farm forever - nothing could ever be built on the property).
2. The farm would be named after Catherine's father and the name would remain forever.
3. The Kent Island Heritage Society would retain the farm house, gravesite and twenty-five (25) acres surrounding them.
4. The money received as payment for the farm would be placed in the escrow account in order to provide the life tenant the following:

a. A payment of \$3,333.00 per month for the remainder of his life.

b. Continue to have complete, free access to any and all sections of the farm (a truck of golf cart would be provided with driver).

c. The Society would have born the expense to petition the Circuit Court for Queen Anne's County to affirm that the sale would be in compliance with the terms and conditions of Catherine's Last Will and Testament, and further insure that the land would have remained in open space and dedicated to the Kirwan Family name.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS PROPOSAL WAS REJECTED BY THE LIFE TENANT'S REPRESENTATIVE.

The Kent Island Heritage Society can do no more. We are viewed by many as a greedy lot, who, without care threw out the life tenant; brought in "hippies" to Catherine's home and as a result of the will are now rich! Now everyone knows what has really happened and what is currently going on.

We have lost our opportunity to place the farm in easement. What will happen in the future to the farm, I cannot say. But I can tell you this, The Kent Island Heritage Society did everything in its power to comply with Catherine's wishes to keep the farm, and we always kept the life tenant's benefits foremost in all of our negotiations.

Sincerely,

Hugo G. Gemignani, President Kent Island Heritage Society

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BYLAWS OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

Article I: Name and Purpose

Section 1. The name of the organization shall be The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc., hereinafter referred to as The Society.

Section 2. The purposes of The Society are as follows: to discover, identify, restore and preserve the heritage of Kent Island and to create and foster an awareness in the community and the general public of the historic significance of Kent Island; to preserve the materials and data so collected for scholarly use and study; to cooperate with county and state officials and institutions, including civic organizations and churches; to ensure preservation and accessibility of records; to encourage investigations of aboriginal sites; and to promote the preservation of historic sites, homes, buildings, monuments, and markers.

Article II: Membership

Section 1. Any persons, businesses or organizations interested in the purposes of The Society are eligible for membership.

Section 2. No person shall be considered for Active or Life Membership in The Society until his or her contribution shall have been paid to the Treasurer for the year in which such person applies.

Section 3. The right to vote or hold office is reserved for members who are in good standing.

Article III: Contributions

Section 1. Annual contributions shall be established by The Society's Board of Directors.

Section 2. Membership applications shall be mailed to: The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc., PO Box 321, Stevensville, MD 21666-4001 and shall be paid annually.

Section 3. The fiscal year of The Society shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Section 4. Contributions are payable on or before January 1 and members shall be considered delinquent if monies are not paid by June 1. Memberships remaining delinquent in December shall be removed from the membership list.

Section 5. Active membership will be designated as those who contribute each fiscal year. A one time contribution of \$250 shall be considered for Life Membership within The Society.

Section 6. All persons holding membership in The Society shall be issued a membership card for each current fiscal year.

Section 7. A current membership card shall be a prerequisite of voting privileges at the annual meeting.

Section 8. All Life and Honorary Members shall be issued a certificate.

Article IV: Elections

Section 1. In June of each fiscal year the Board of Directors shall meet and appoint a nominating committee which shall consist of three or more persons who shall nominate a person for each office. The nominating committee shall prepare a list of candidates to be presented at the September Directors meeting and circulated by the Secretary to all Active and Life members of The Society with the notice of the Annual meeting in December.

Section 2. A call to the Annual Meeting, issued at least two weeks before the meeting, shall consist of any amendment or bylaw revision and the nominated slate of officers.

Section 3. Nominations other than those submitted by the nominating committee must be received by the Recording Secretary in writing, together with the nominees' consent to run, not later than 21 days prior to the annual election.

Section 4. The Chairman of the nominating committee shall conduct the election of officers at the Annual Meeting, followed immediately by the installation of officers.

Section 5. If there is only one nominee for each office, a voice vote shall be taken at the Annual Meeting. If two or more nominations are presented for each office, a ballot vote must occur.

Article V: Meetings/Quorum

Section 1. Regular meetings of The Society shall be held on the third Thursday of the months of September, December, March, and June, at such time and place on Kent Island as may be fixed by the Board of Directors. Regular meetings shall be general meetings open for the transaction of any business, except in cases in which special notice is required by the Charter or these Bylaws. Notice of regular meetings shall be given to all members by the Secretary at least fourteen days before the date of such meeting.

Section 2. The regular meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held at the President's discretion, at such time and place as may be designated by the President. Special meetings shall be called by the Secretary, at the request of the President or four Directors. Notice of all meetings shall be given at least three days before such meeting.

Section 3. At any meeting of the Board of Directors, a majority of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business, except where a greater number is required on any matter by the Charter or these Bylaws. At any meeting of the Board of Directors, a majority of the vote cast shall be sufficient to elect and to pass any measure, unless the election or measure is one which, by express provision of the Charter or these Bylaws, a different vote is required.

Section 4. At the Annual Meeting twenty-five (25) members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. The Annual Meeting shall be held in December.

Article VI: Board of Directors

Section 1. The business of The Society shall be conducted and managed by the Board of Directors, which may exercise all the powers of The Society, except such as are the Charter or by these Bylaws, conferred upon or reserved to the members.

Section 2. The Board of directors shall consist of five officers; President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and a minimum of six (6) other Directors and a maximum of fifteen (15).

Section 3. In the event of a vacancy during the term of an Officer or Director, the nominating Committee shall propose a candidate to fill such vacancy to the Board of Directors, who shall cause such proposal to be circulated to all Active and Life Members of The Society, with the notice of the regular or special meeting, at which such vacancy is to be filled.

Section 4. Any member or Officer desiring to resign from The Society's Board of Directors shall submit the resignation in writing to the Corresponding Secretary who shall present it to the President for further action.

Section 5. The Board of Directors shall serve for a three (3) year term, beginning January 1 of the fiscal year following the Annual Meeting at which they were appointed by the President with approval of the Board of Directors.

Article VII: Officers

Section 1. Officers shall serve for a one year term beginning January 1 of the fiscal year following the Annual Meeting at which they were elected.

Section 2. The President shall have general supervision over the affairs of The Society and shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Board of Directors and the Membership are carried into effect. The President may execute in the name of The Society all instrument requiring a Seal, except in cases where the signing or execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Board of Directors to some other Officer or Agent of The Society. The President shall sign all orders on the Treasury and shall appoint Chairmen of standing and special committees.

Section 3. The Vice-President shall, in the absence or disability of the President, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President and shall aid the President in any coordination of activities as directed by the President.

Section 4. The Recording Secretary shall attend all meetings of The Society and of the Board of Directors and record all votes and minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpose. In the absence or disability of the Recording Secretary, the Corresponding Secretary shall perform the duties of the Recording Secretary. In the absence of both the Recording Secretary and the Corresponding Secretary, the aforementioned duties shall be performed by such member as may be designated by the President. The Recording Secretary shall keep in safe custody the Seal of The Society and, when authorized by these Bylaws or the Board of Directors, affix the same to any instrument requiring it and when so affixed, it shall be attested by the Secretary's signature. The Recording Secretary shall keep all permanent records of The Society and list of its members.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall: receive all monies belonging to The Society; keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements; deposit all monies in the name and to the credit of The Society in such depositories as may be designated by the Board of Directors; make payments from The Society's funds, only on the presentation of bills approved

by the Board of Directors; furnish a written report of the financial condition of The Society at each regular meeting and Board of Directors meeting; and be bonded for the amount equal to the total cash funds of The Society, the amount of which shall be designated by the Board of Directors.

Section 6. In addition to the powers and duties enumerated in this Article, the Officers shall exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as may be imposed upon them from time to time by these Bylaws or by resolution or order of The Society or the Board of Directors.

Article VIII: Committees

Section 1. The President shall appoint, with the approval of the Board of Directors, the following standing committees: Membership, Budget, Program, Publicity, Newsletter, Library/Genealogy, Grants, Audit, Nominating, Bylaws, Kirwan Property, Cray House Interior, Train Station, Smoke House, Buildings and Grounds. The President, with the approval of the Board of Directors, may appoint such special committees as may be necessary from time to time.

Section 2. All committees except the Membership and Nominating Committees may be composed of three, five, or seven members, at the discretion of the Board of Directors. The Membership and Nominating Committees may be chosen from the Membership, from the Board of Directors, or both, except that no Officer or Director shall be a member of the Audit Committee. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all Committees except the Audit and Nominating Committees.

Section 3. In addition to the duties imposed by these Bylaws, all committees shall perform such other duties as may be designated by the President or the Board of Directors.

Article IX: Amendments

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall submit proposed amendments to these Bylaws to The Society upon a vote of two-thirds members of the Board. Amendments may be adopted at any regular or special meeting of The Society, provided notice of the proposed alteration or repeal be contained in the notice of such regular or special meeting, mailed to each member of The Society at least two weeks in advance of the date of the regular or special meeting. A two-thirds vote of the members voting on any amendment to these Bylaws at such meeting shall be required to adopt such amendment.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall submit proposed amendments to the Charter to The Society upon a vote of at least two-thirds of the Board or upon motion of a majority of Active and Life Members of the Society. Proposed amendments must be typed in triplicate and submitted to the Recording Secretary to be submitted to the Board of Directors. Action shall be taken on a Charter Amendment within one hundred and twenty days after receipt, provided the proposed amendment meets all the requirements previously stated in the Article. Amendments may be adopted only in the manner set forth in the Charter.

Article X: Executive Committee

Section 1. The executive Committee shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and the Chairmen of all committees stated in Article VIII.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall be an advisory committee to keep The Society and the Board of Directors advised of the progress and work of the various standing committees.

Section 3. The Executive Committee shall make a report on the progress of the various affairs of The Society to the Board of Directors and Membership through the Recording Secretary.

Article XI: Acquisitions and Collections

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall provide for the custody of all materials, documents, manuscripts, and objects of whatever description received by The Society, such custody may be provided through housing furnished by The Society or through other means deemed proper and safe by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. In providing for the custody of objects received or acquired by The Society, the Board of Directors shall not part with full title or ownership of such materials, documents, manuscripts, real property, or objects of whatever description.

Ownership of such objects, materials, and property may be relinquished only by vote of The Society at any regular or special meeting when the proposed final disposition shall have been announced in the notice of the meeting.

Section 3. In the event that The Society shall fail to have a valid meeting of its Membership for five consecutive years, then all documents, manuscripts, and other tangible personalty of historical significance shall be delivered to the Queen Anne's County Historical Society for safekeeping and preservation for the benefit of the residents of Kent Island. In

the event that The Society shall fail to have a valid meeting of its Membership for five consecutive years, then the Directors shall transfer the remaining assets of The Society to another charitable organization qualified to be exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended. In the event that the Queen Anne's County Historical Society is a viable entity with Section 501 (c) (3) qualification, then the remaining assets shall be transferred to that charitable organization for the benefit of the residents of Kent Island.

Article XII: Miscellaneous

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall appoint from the Membership an Historian who shall summarize the work and progress of The Society at the Annual Meeting and prepare a report to be filed with the permanent records of The Society.

Section 2. The Board of Directors may appoint a Legal Advisor from the Membership.

Section 3. The Audit Committee, consisting of a minimum of at least three persons, shall carefully examine the financial records of The Society and deliver a report of its findings at the Annual Meeting and such other times as it may be called upon to do so.

Section 4. Robert's Rules of Order shall apply for all Parliamentary proceedings.

August 22, 1997 - Board Meeting

Minutes

Topics covered included:

- The Society has not received word concerning the application to the State concerning our request for funds for the restoration of the Cray House.

- Emil LaCivita has volunteered to have the Kent Island Volunteer Band play for a dance to be sponsored by the Society. The wine/beer proceeds would be given to the Legion, Queenstown Bank will underwrite cost of the tickets and the rest of the profits will go to the Society. More details are forthcoming.

- There is a Scholarship Fund for the new Kent Island High School. Anyone interested in making a donation should contact Audrey Hawkins.

- Kent Island Day is scheduled for May 16, 1998 from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

- The Christmas dinner is planned for December 13.

- Two projects were proposed for the Society: a band stand to be built next to the Cray House and the purchase of the old Stevensville Post Office. Both would be looked into.

Kent Island Heritage Society President Hugo Gemignani is available for speaking engagements on the Chesapeake Bay and the Kent Island Heritage Society. Call him at (410) 643-1690 to make arrangements.

Treasurer's Report

**June 1, through
August 22, 1997
Audrey Hawkins**



Beginning Balance in Checking Account
..... \$3,186.81

Accounts Receivable

Included membership dues, donations, bank interest, sales income, sales tax, 1997 patron ads, basket raffle, KI Days Book, membership and grant

..... \$1,255.53

Total Receivables & Checking Acct. Balance

..... \$4,442.34

Total Disbursements

Included purchases for resale, Cray House electric & maintenance, postage, printing, loan payments, sewer, Sam's Club membership and miscellaneous

..... \$2,515.11

Balance in Checking Account as of 8/22/97

..... \$1,927.23

Balance in CD Account

..... \$10,444.43

Balance in CD Account

..... \$675.12

Balance in Fund-raising Account

..... \$7,008.56

Ending loan balance

..... \$4,270.50



**Mark this special evening
on your calendar!**

We are pleased to announce the date of our Annual Kent Island Heritage Society Christmas Party and Dinner as December 13, 1997.

This year's festivities will take place at the Kent Island Yacht Club. Plans are to begin our celebration at 6:00 p.m.

We will send you "formal" invitations in early November.

After the success of last year's silent auction, we will have another one at this year's dinner party. Donate a piece of Island memorabilia, a painting, an old piece of china, a candlestick, anything you find appropriate. Make your favorite craft. Use your imagination!

To have your treasure picked up, call Barbara Nash at 410-643-5196, Wendy Morrow at 410-643-3616 or John Smigo at 410-643-4609. Or call Florence Dunn at 410-643-5414 if you would like to drop a treasure at her home in Stevensville.

Please join us... it won't be a success without you,

John Smigo and Gail Rumenap
Christmas Dinner Committee

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Membership dues are \$10 per person per year or \$100 for a lifetime membership.

Name(s), address, telephone number & payment can be mailed to **The Kent Island Heritage Society, Membership**
P.O. Box 321 • Stevensville, MD 21666

The Kent Island Heritage Society
P.O. Box 321
Stevensville, MD 21666

Address Change Requested

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21666

The next general membership meeting is November 6th at the library in Stevensville. Light refreshments at 7 p.m.; business meeting at 7:30 p.m.; Captain Harry Porter, guest speaker at 8 p.m.