

Isle of Kent - 1631

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

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. ■ FALL 2006

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President's Message

EIGHT YEARS OF SERVING as your president has passed all too quickly and, as always, year's end brings a time of remembrances, resolution and reflection.

Remembrances

❖ Our excellent General Meeting programs:

March 8 "The Battle of Slippery Hill. Kent Island's Place in the History of the War of 1812," presented by Scott Sheads, Fort McHenry National Park Ranger.

June 14 The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Water Trail and Explorer Captain John Smith, Kate Livie, speaker.

Sept. 13 Kent Island Born 'n' Bred, QACTV7 DVD featuring Melvin Clark, Willim Denny, Nick Hoxter.

❖ Awarding of the Kent Island Heritage Society's Scholarship to Jackie Lynn Stowe, daughter of James Stowe and granddaughter of Jack and Rita Stowe, all of Chester.

❖ Restoration and reopening of the Stevensville Bank of Maryland (1903) in Historic Stevensville Town Center as a historic site.

❖ Opening of the Kirwan Store (1890) as a museum featuring merchandise and goods that would have been sold in the era 1890-1920.

❖ The Queen Anne's County Tricentennial Tea held on April 18 at River House in Queenstown, sponsored by The Kent Island Heritage Society, The Queen Anne's County

Continued on page 2

Recommended Slate of Officers and Directors

An election of officers and directors who will conduct the business of The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc. in 2007 will be held at the Annual Meeting on Dec. 9, 2006. The nominating committee of John Broderick and Dan Hopkins recommend the following slate:

President

Nancy M. Cook

Vice President

John E. Broderick

Recording Secretary

Flora S. Sossi

Corresponding Secretary

Carole P. Frederick

Treasurers

Audrey B. Hawkins

Director

J. Wayne Morris

Director

Myrtle A. Bruscup

Director

Francis K. Collier

Director

John W. Gibson Jr.

Antoinette B. Gibson

Officers are elected for a one-year term; directors serve for three years.

Additional nominations may be made 21 days prior to the Annual Meeting. A declaration of intent must be presented to the Recording Secretary, Flora S. Sossi, 335 Five Farms Drive, Stevensville, MD 21666 and must be signed by the candidate and two supporting members of The Society.

Mark Your Calendar

Kent Island Heritage Society ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, December 9
Kent Island Yacht Club

6:00 p.m. Cash Bar

7:00 p.m. Dinner

Please return the reservation form on
back page by December 1.

COMMITTEES

Docents

Audrey Hawkins
Kent Island Day
John Broderick
Flora Sossi
Fundraising

Programs

Jack Broderick
Kirwan Property
Bill Denny
Dan Hopkins
Wayne Morris
Greg Nizza, Caretkr
Kirwan Interior
Midge Kirwan
Myrtle Bruscup
Linda Collier
Lora Lake
Jane Sparks
Emma Thomas
Cray House
Janet Denny
Bill Denny

Old Stevensville P.O.

Francis Collier
Fran Peters
Train Depot
Florence Dunn
Gil Dunn
Publicity
Greg Nizza

Oral Histories

Brent Lewis

Christmas Dinner

Myrtle Bruscup
Janet Denny
Carole Frederick

Nominating

Jack Broderick

Grants

Nancy Cook

Membership

Mae Hutchison

Library Files

Myrtle Bruscup

Mary White

Audit

Scholarship

Jane Sparks

Social

Janet Denny

Cemetery Identification & Preservation

Lora Lake

Editor

John Bonner

President's Message

Continued from page 1

Historical Society and the Tricentennial Committee.

❖ The June 8 Queen Anne's County Tricentennial Concert held in conjunction with the Queen Anne's County Arts Council on the Kirwan House grounds featuring The Queen Anne's Chorale, the Kent Island Big Band and the Pride of the Bay Barbershop Ensemble.

❖ Acquisition of a 1929 B&O Railroad caboose, to be restored as an historic site and opened for visitors.

❖ Oral histories conducted by Brent Lewis that are so valuable as a lasting resource of Kent Island lore and the persons involved in its history.

Reflections

The Society is a very active one due not only to the contributions and hard work of the board members, but to those who aid in carrying out our mission of preserving Kent Island's heritage.

❖ The Kent Island Garden Club.

❖ Docent Coordinator Audry Hawkins and Docents Hanna Wall, Barbara and George Marmion, Chris and Teresa Kilian, Butch and Linda Collier, Fran Peters, Fran Taylor, Carole Frederick, Louise Price, Joann Anderson, Gil and Florence Dunn, Richard and Eileen Dadds, Janet Denny, Myrtle Bruscup, Lora Lake and Don Broome.

❖ Newsletter editor John Bonner.

❖ The Society's librarians Myrtle Bruscup and Mary White.

❖ The Kirwan Store Museum Committee: Linda Collier, Midge Kirwan, Lora Lake, Jane Sparks, Myrtle Bruscup, Emma Thomas.

❖ Oral History Chair Brent Lewis.

❖ Membership Chair Mae Hutchison.

❖ Kirwan Caretaker Greg Nizza.

❖ Mailing Labels Chair Shari Smigo.

❖ Outgoing directors Fran Peters and Janet Denny.

The Society must continue to recruit volunteers in order to maintain opportunities for those interested in history to see and hear about our artifacts from the past.

Nancy M. Cook

Critical Repairs Begin On Historic Christ Church

The 126-year-old Christ Church's bell tower is leaning and pulling away from the sanctuary wall. The major part of the planned repairs involves straightening the bell tower and repairing damage to the sanctuary wall.

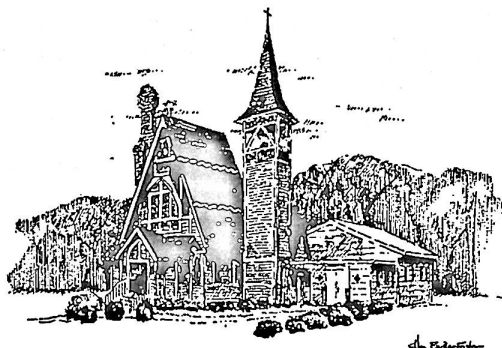
Additional work includes repairs to sanctuary floor joists, replacing custom decorative metal roof truss braces, repairs to the slate roof, and repairing the unique brick chimney.

The adjoining rectory is being restored to its original appearance. This will involve removal of a porch on the east side, the front entrance canopy and circular metal stairs to the third floor. Also, the roof will be replaced and repairs made to roof trusses and floor joists.

Work is expected to be completed by next summer. Yet to be scheduled are interior cosmetic work such as repairing plaster and repainting.

The church properties are now owned by Queen Anne's County, which plans to make the facility available for weddings and community group activities. They also are planning to create a museum on Kent Island history.

KIHS is working closely with county officials on these developments.



Isle of Kent

John Bonner, Editor

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Garden Club Meets at Kirwan House

By Diana Bonner

To celebrate the 300th Anniversary of Queen Anne's County, the Kent Island Garden Club's theme for 2006 through March 2007 is "Celebrating Our Heritage".

The garden club held its October meeting at the Kirwan house on Friday the 13th. Heritage Society President Nancy Cook greeted the members and thanked them for their work at Kirwan gardens, Cray House seasonal decorations and herb garden, landscaping at the historical markers in the Stevensville cemetery and plantings in the tubs at the train station and Stevensville Post Office.

Heritage Society member Linda Collier gave an entertaining and educational program on Mourning Traditions in America from 1860-1920 and shared her extensive and unique collection of mourning paraphernalia as well as displaying many items made from human hair.

Members were also treated to a tour of the Kirwan store conducted by Linda and Nancy.

Friday the 13th turned out to be a lucky day for The Kent Island Garden Club members and strengthened the partnership between the club and The Kent Island Heritage Society.



Oral History Project Update

By Brent Lewis

The Kent Island Heritage Society's oral history project is on a mission. Its objective is to capture the memories of as many senior Kent Islanders as possible.

Accomplishing these goals consists of several steps: Identifying candidates, scheduling and conducting interviews, and documentation are the primary tasks. Preparation is crucial and there are details to manage. And as the old adage goes, 'In life, as in comedy, timing is everything.'

In past newsletters, various interview subjects (or narrators) have been profiled. Their personal backgrounds and their recollections, their knowledge and their anecdotes, were culled from one hour recorded discussions. Previous profiles include: Melvin Clark, Eva Thompson, Alvin Grollman, Bill Denney, Wes Thompson, Oscar "Sonny" Schulz, and Wilbur Garrett. Captain Billy Harris and Joe Thompson were both interviewed mere weeks before they passed away.

In recent months we've sat down with Bobby Timms, a much loved and respected waterman. Put his insights together with those of Gordon Crouch, a second generation seafood businessman and local history buff, you get a picture of life that no artist could reproduce. Reggie Jones is a well-known Islander with a long memory and some of the most amusing stories. Mr. Jones is also one of the most knowledgeable guys around when it comes to the history of property development on Kent Island.

William Hoxter was born in Chester in 1922 and his family has deep roots. Mr. Hoxter is a wealth of information and a gifted woodworker. He specializes in model Chesapeake Bay watercraft.

Reverend Roy Phillips is one of our most beloved spiritual leaders. Bill Baxter is an expert on 17th century Kent Island. His personal artifact collection is of museum quality. Dr. Harry

Left: Linda Collier and Garden Club President Linda Armiger view display of historic mourning items.

Rhodes is a man of great character. A scholar, an author and a philanthropist, Dr. Rhodes was superintendent of schools for many years and was on the front line of the battle for desegregation.

A cameraman from the community television station, QACTV, was present at these last three sessions. Not only is the recordation of a higher quality, but we can perhaps soon look forward to seeing the interviews broadcast to the public.

And to profiles in future newsletters.

The oral history project meets many of the aims of The Heritage Society's efforts to "discover, identify, restore and preserve the heritage of Kent Island."

The list of candidates is long and there will inevitably be regrets. Volunteer interviewers for the project are welcome. If you'd like to help, all you need to do is contact a KIHS board member.

In the meantime, we're winning the war against a disappearing heritage.

In Memoriam

JANE GRAFTON

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

Calendar of Events

- ❑ **December 1**
Tricentennial Time
Capsule Planting
Christmas Parade
- ❑ **December 9, 6 p.m.**
KIHS Annual Meeting
Kent Island Yacht Club

The Greatest Fan

By Natalie Willis

In a world riven by war, depression and racism, young children turned to ordinary men who, in their eyes at least, did extraordinary things. During the 1920s and '30s adolescent boys found their heroes in professional baseball players.

They admired them for their talents, their style, their wins, but mostly for their success at a popular sport that, in the eyes of a child, was the greatest game on earth.

Most boys who grew up in that period worshiped the champions of the era, such as Babe Ruth and the New York Yankees.

This story is about one particular boy, Charles Gilbert "Gil" Dunn, who admired a baseball player whose greatness went unrecognized. To Gil, his hero was just as excellent as Babe Ruth. That player was Jimmie Foxx.

Jimmie Foxx began his career with the Philadelphia Athletics. He played the major part of his career with the Athletics, which won a number of world championships. He eventually was traded to the Boston Red Sox.

Throughout his life Gil followed Foxx's successes. There being no television, Gil would listen to the radio or go to the movies every Saturday, where they presented news along with the movie.

Foxx, however, like others during his time,

succumbed to the pressures of being a professional athlete. His career was abruptly ended by his obsessive drinking and gambling.

Gil continued his life in Baltimore, married Florence Handford and the couple had five children.

Gil was a pharmacist at a local drug store when his boss presented him with the opportunity to run a pharmacy on Kent Island. After heavy consideration, Gil accepted the offer and moved his family down to the shores of Kent Island in 1953.

Once Gil became acquainted with his surroundings, he realized that nearby Sudlersville was the home town of his childhood hero, Jimmie Foxx. He found the home where Jimmie grew up and went there to get a look at Foxx's real life.

To Gil's surprise, most of Sudlersville was ashamed of Jimmie Foxx because of the way his career ended. Appalled that Foxx's home town would abandon him, Gil decided to make his own tribute to his hero. He began gathering newspaper clippings and Foxx memorabilia. As his collection grew, he devoted a corner of his drug store to Jimmie Foxx.

Belatedly, Gil rallied the courage to write Foxx for permission.

After a long wait he sent Foxx a second letter.

Six long months passed with no response.

Then, one day Foxx called on the phone and casually asked, "What are you doing up there, Dunn?"

Gil described the tribute he had built. At the end of their conversation he said "If you're ever in town please stop by."

Foxx had not said "No," so, naturally, Gil continued to expand his museum.

Six more months passed. One day an older, heavyset man walked into the pharmacy and said to an employee at the counter, "I'm looking for Gil Dunn."

The man walked over to Gil and said, "Do you know who I am."

Bursting with excitement, Gil blurted out, "You're Jimmie Foxx."

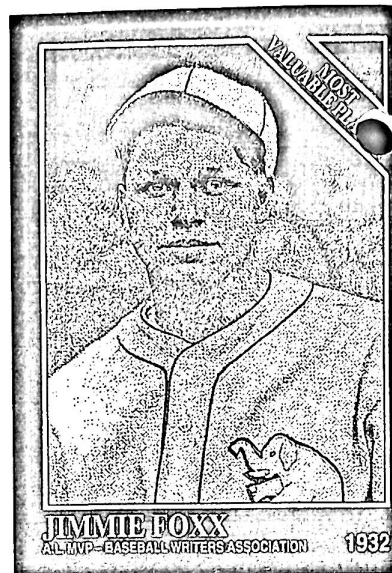
"You're my biggest fan if you can recognize me after all the years," Foxx responded.

They both laughed. Gil showed him his small memorial.

After an enjoyable conversation where Gil asked many questions, Foxx took Gil out to his car, opened the trunk, and there lay all of the memorabilia from his baseball years, his gloves, bats, hats, jerseys and other items.

Gil was staring down at a pot of gold. Foxx said, "I want you to have it."

Gil could not believe his ears. He



said, "No, I couldn't."

Then Foxx said in a very humbling voice, "No one else wants it, so you might as well have it. You're the only one who cares." Gil was moved by his words and graciously accepted Foxx's wondrous gifts.

Gil's experience with his childhood hero inspired him to search further into Maryland's baseball legends. He added five other Maryland baseball players who are in the National Baseball Hall of Fame: Al Kaline, Judy

James Emory "The Beast" or "Double X" Foxx
 Height: 6' 3" Weight: 195 lbs. Bats: Right Throws: Right
 Born: Oct. 22, 1907, Sudlersville, MD
 Died: July 21, 1967, Miami, FL
 Hall of Fame: 1951

YEAR TEAM	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	AVG
1932 PHA	154	585	151	213	33	9	58	169	.364
1933 PHA	153	573	125	204	37	9	48	163	.356
1939 Bos-A	149	565	139	197	33	9	50	175	.349

Jimmie Foxx tripled on Most Valuable Player awards, earning the top honor in 1932, '33, and '38. In '32 he tagged 58 home runs, the most ever by a right-handed batter at that time, and he also led the league with 169 RBIs. The powerful 1st baseman captured the Triple Crown in 1933, the first one for the AL since Ty Cobb's feat in 1909. He also led the league in slugging and in total bases, leaving his competition (Ruth, Gehrig, and Manush) in the dust. He hit 35 or more homers for 9 consecutive years. Stories of majestic "Double X" homers abound. In Game 5 of the 1930 Series, Foxx hit a 2-run homer that pitcher Burleigh Grimes described as "knocking the concrete loose in the center field bleachers." Lindsey, a bullpen pitcher for the Cardinals said of Foxx's 1931 Series homer, "We were watching that ball for 2 innings." In 1938 "The Beast" failed to win his second Triple Crown only because Hank Greenberg unloaded 58 homers for Detroit. But Jimmie did receive his third MVP award.

The Sporting News
 CONLON COLLECTION

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 ©1993 Jimmie Foxx under license by Curtis Wright, Group, Inc., Indianapolis, IN
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Johnson, Frank "Homerun" Baker, Lefty Love, and Babe Ruth. This small tribute to one baseball player evolved into a Kent Island Hall of Fame.

Gil never saw Foxx after that magical day when he met his hero. That day, Gil's dreams came true. It is a day he will never forget.

Jimmie Foxx died in a choking incident in Florida a year after this encounter with his "greatest fan." It took the people of Sudlersville 18 more years to finally get over their pique. In 1985, they erected a bronze statue to honor their now-favorite son, Jimmie Foxx

Natalie Wills is the daughter of Jim and Bucky Wills and the granddaughter of Gil and Florence Dunn. She is a junior at St. Mary's High School in Annapolis and is goalie for the lacross team.

Those Were The Good Old Days

By Anne K. Reifsneider

Stevensville and deliver me right to my grandparents' house.

My mother would always call ahead so that my grandmother would be there to meet me. My grandfather would take me to his bowling alley and also to visit Grollman's store for some candy.

The procedure was reversed when I returned to Love Point. Those were the good old days. One could not do this now with a six-year old.

I have many fond memories of the area. Others include Aunt Ella Hoxter and Dr. Theodore Sattlemier, who lived across the street from my grandparents²

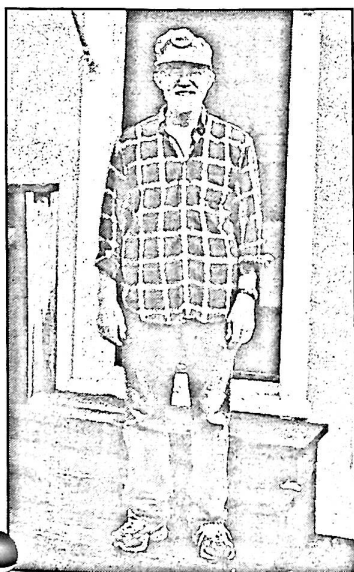
I hold love and fond memories of Stevensville and wish I still lived there, but my roots are

now in Oxon Hill.

1. Annie's mother was the daughter of Benjamin Harrison "Harry" Bright and Annie Gertrude Price. Harry Bright, was an original director of The Stevensville Bank in 1909, along with Henry Grollman.

2. Dr. Sattlemier came to Stevensville in 1924 and opened an office in the house occupied by Mrs. Clay (Ella) Coval Hoxter. He later married Elizabeth Benton, daughter of Dr. John Benton, and moved to Benton's Pleasure.

From a letter written by the author to Mary J. White, who provided the footnoted genealogical annotations.



Chris Kilian
Train Depot



Barbara Marmion, Cray House
Allie Bernadyn, Cray House (youngest at age 9)



George Marmion
Train Depot

THESE DOCENTS BRAVED THE WINDY, WET WEATHER OF ERNESTO ON SEPTEMBER 2.

Ms. Charlotte's Christmas Tree

By Francis "Butch" Collier

CHARLOTTE SEVERA, my wonderful mother-in-law, had expressed over the years her desire for an old-time cedar Christmas tree. The slim, prickly kind that you could leave in a cold parlor until May. The kind of tree that you see growing wild in unmown fields next to highways.

She also told us that it would be nice if it came from her son Bunky's farm on Rte. 8 across from the old Matapeake Ferry Terminal.

Bunky, my wife Linda, Linda's son Adam and I searched the farm and the marsh and came up empty handed. That's when Linda and I came up with "THE GREAT PLAN": We would find one growing elsewhere and replant it on Bunky's farm.

After an hour or two of trudging through the snow on White's Heritage Farm (with permission), we found the perfect tree. We cut it with as much trunk as possible and then Bunky placed it in a hole on his farm.

As was our family's tradition, the Sunday before Christmas family and friends piled on a hay wagon for the annual gathering of the greens.

Linda's daughter Mindy provided homemade cookies and hot chocolate. After an hour of cutting pine, holly and looking for a cedar tree, we "came upon" the perfect tree. Ms. Charlotte spied it (with a little help from us) and (thank God!) declared it was just the one she wanted.

Bunky immediately

jumped out of the wagon, chainsaw in hand and, holding the unsteady tree with one hand, cut it off at the ground with the other. Ms. Charlotte ecstatically declared it to be the only kind of tree that truly depicted Christmas to her.

Linda and I debated for many years whether or not to confess what we had done. Before we could decide, Ms. Charlotte passed away eight years later at 94, still thinking the tree came from Bunky's farm. "THE GREAT DECEPTION" had provided us with a great Christmas memory and Ms. Charlotte with a great Christmas tree that year.

Butch Collier is a KIHs director.

A Day To Remember

By Gil Dunn

Sixty-eight years ago, I got my automobile driver's license. On the morning of that day, my dad and I made the trip to the Maryland Vehicle Administration building.

After I took several preliminary tests — and passed — I was introduced to the driver inspector. I got in the car behind the wheel, and the driver inspector sat alongside of me.

He told me to drive the car around the block. I put the car in gear and slowly headed around the block. It sputtered and jerked the entire distance.

The inspector wanted to see my parking ability, so he pointed to a parking space between two wrecked autos and told me to park there. He jumped out of the car, leaving me on my own.

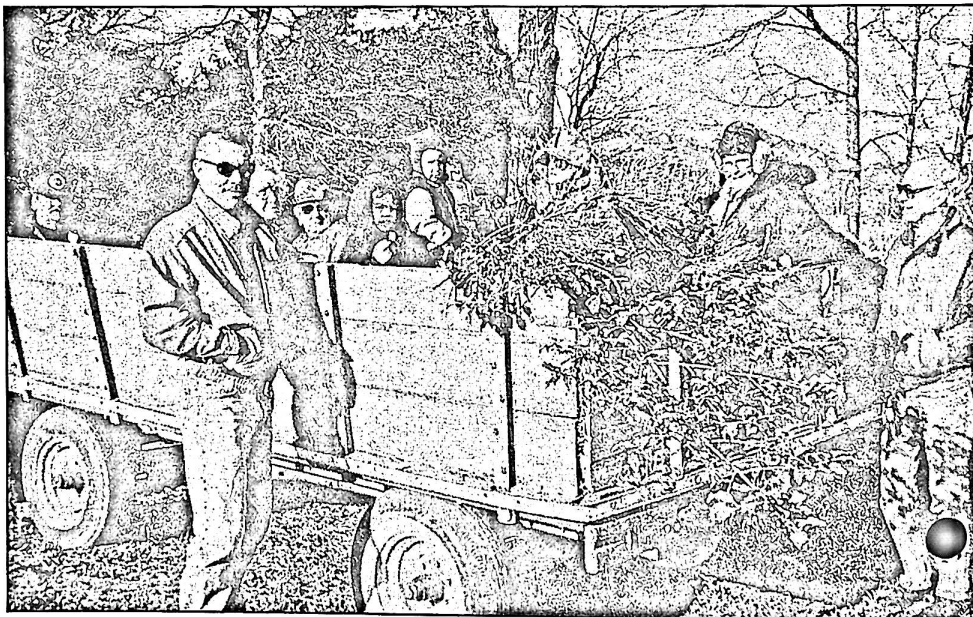
I pulled by the parking space and stopped, took a few minutes to go through the instructions that I had received from my driving teacher, and began.

I looked through the window at the inspector, who was watching the performance. He gave me a thumbs-up sign and got back into the car.

He told me that I had passed the test. Then he suggested that I take the car to a garage and have an automobile mechanic check out what was causing the car to sputter and jerk.

I told him that there was nothing wrong with the car. I was so nervous that my leg wouldn't stop shaking when my foot was on the gas pedal.

I will never forget that day.



Ms. Charlotte is third from the right, snuggling down under her hood.

Here's A Wonderful Timesaving Idea

● Give A KIHS Membership for Christmas

Why not consider giving that hard-to-buy-for-friend-or-relative-who-has-everything a membership in The Kent Island Heritage Society for Christmas? Think of the value. They will receive this informative quarterly newsletter. They will be invited to attend all those stimulating and informative monthly meetings. It is truly the gift that keeps on giving all year long.

Welcome New Members

Darlene Councill Koerner
Delta, Pa.

Larry & Nancy McClelland
Chester, Md.

Jim Walters
Washington, D.C.

THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. P.O. Box 321 • Stevensville, Maryland 21666-0321

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I wish to become a member of the Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.

Enclosed is my check to cover dues of membership indicated below:

Life Membership ...	\$250.00	Single Membership ...	\$15.00
Organization Membership ...	\$25.00	Family Membership ...	\$25.00

Name _____

Street _____

Town/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

*Dues and contributions are deductible on income tax returns.
Membership period January 1 - December 31*

(Or maybe a book?)

Publications For Sale by KIHS

Of History and Houses A Kent Island Heritage Mildred Schoch	\$20.00
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The Forgotten Seven: The Decoy Carvers of Kent Island Hugo Gemignani	\$15.00
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The Isle of Kent - The 350 th Anniversary A Commemorative History	\$5.00
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Burial Permits - 1900-1922 - Kent Island Cause of death and burial site data compiled by Mary White; prepared for publication by Mary Jane and Josuha Leaverton	\$10.00
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RESERVATIONS FOR ANNUAL MEETING

Name(s) _____

Telephone No. _____

Names of others sharing your table (maximum of 8 per table)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Reservations must be received by December 1

Tickets are \$30 per person

Please enclose check payable to: The Kent Island Heritage Society

✂ Mail to: Carole Frederick, 521 Love Point Rd., Stevensville, MD 21666

The Kent Island Heritage Society, Inc.
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