

# Isle of Kent - 1631

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

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE KENT ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC. ■ WINTER 2004

## OFFICERS

President  
Nancy M. Cook  
Vice President  
Daniel T. Hopkins  
Corresponding Secy  
Carole P. Frederick  
Recording Secretary  
Florence M. Dunn  
Treasurer  
Audrey B. Hawkins

## DIRECTORS

Joel D. Berger  
John E. Broderick  
Myrtle A. Bruscup  
Forrest P. Chisman  
Francis K. Collier  
Janet C. Denny  
William E. Denny III  
Charles "Gil" Dunn  
Lawrence J. Dunn Jr.  
Brent F. Lewis  
John Wayne Morris  
Gregory J. Nizza  
Frances L. Peters  
Flora S. Sossi  
Jane G. Sparks  
C. Willard Thomas  
Paul W. Wilderson III

## COMMITTEES

Docent Coordinator  
Audrey Hawkins  
Kent Island Day  
Nancy Cook, Bill Denny  
Fundraising - Gil Dunn  
Programs - Dan Hopkins  
Kirwan Property - Greg  
Nizza, Dan Hopkins,  
Wayne Morris, Forrest  
Chisman, Bill Denny  
Cray House  
Janet Denny, Bill Denny  
Old Stevensville P.O.  
Francis Collier, Bill  
Denny  
Train Depot  
Paul Wilderson  
Publicity - Greg Nizza  
Oral Histories  
Jane Sparks, Dan  
Hopkins, Fran Taylor  
Membership  
Mae Hutchison  
Library Files - Myrtle  
Bruscup, Mary White  
Social  
Scholarship  
Jane Sparks

## President's Message

The Kent Island Heritage Society begins this new year by setting goals and instituting procedures and plans to attain them. We welcome new board members Janet Denny, Fran Peters, Flora Sossi, Myrtle Bruscup and Jack Broderick, who will use their unique talents in helping our present board achieve these goals. We will be holding a retreat with our new board where the goals of our organization will be discussed.

Opening the James E. Kirwan Museum on a regular basis, restoring several rooms of the Kirwan House, accessioning (cataloguing) the furnishings of all our historic sites, revitalizing our oral history program and establishing a vital docent program are immediate projects.

This will be a meeting-filled year for your president. As a member of the 300th Anniversary of Queen Anne's County Committee, the Historic Sites Consortium Committee for Educational Curriculum Development of Kent Island history, The Queen Anne's Historical Society, the Historic Sites Consortium, the Historic Stevensville Merchants, and as vice chairperson of the Friends of Historic Christ Church Advisory Committee, our organization will have an effective voice in all matters historic.

The Friends of Historic Christ Church Advisory Committee, under the capable leadership of Mr. Steve Davis, director of Queen Anne's Parks and Recreation, has met.

*Continued on page 2*

## Historic Cemeteries Must Be Protected, Preserved

By Nancy Cook

I received a telephone call two days before Christmas from a concerned lifelong Kent Island resident. He was most upset about a family gravesite that had been disturbed and gravestones damaged during the removal of overgrown brush on a plot of land abutting a commercial establishment.

After making several phone calls to Queen Anne's County Planning and Zoning, I was assured that the owner of the establishment had been contacted and issued a citation for disturbing that particular plot of land. To his credit the proprietor has agreed to restore the stones and also to make a permanent marker listing other persons believed to have been buried there.

There have been several incidents such as this during the last few years with more and more businesses and housing developments being built on Kent Island. During the 1700s and 1800s the custom of having family cemeteries was prevalent. There are many family graveyards that have long been left to the weeds and debris of modern civilization. Many of the sites have not been identified because

*Continued on page 5*

## Mark Your Calendar

### Kent Island Heritage Society GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, March 2

Kent Island Free Library

7 p.m. Refreshments

7:30 p.m. Program

Richard Ervin, Archeologist

State Highway Administration

"Archeology & the Cemeteries of Kent  
Island"

## President's Message

Continued from page 1

Heritage Society members will receive updates on the restoration and programming plans for the church building.

Special mention must be made of the passing of one of our most loyal supporters and active participants, Mr. Roland Bruscup. As the minister stated in his eulogy, "I just cannot imagine going in the Old Stevensville Train Depot during Kent Island Day and not seeing our friend, Roland." He will be sorely missed.

As always, we need volunteers. There are so many areas of interest—genealogy, historic research of places and people, providing docent services, providing carpentry skills, helping with Kent Island Day and many, many other projects.

Also, board members have been charged with the task of increasing our membership. If you know someone who feels pride in our community and who supports our mission and objectives, won't you please ask them to join us? They will be welcomed with open arms. Please ask them to call 410-758-2502 to become an active member.

Included with this issue of *Isle of Kent* are forms for vendor registration and scholarship application. If you know of vendors/crafters appropriate

## KNOW YOUR BOARD

### FLORA S. SOSSI

Married, husband Richard, daughter Yvette and grandson Armando. History minor in college. Retired from National Security Agency. Working now for property management firm handling shopping centers. Interests are history, politics, environment and community.

Currently member of Queen Anne's County Board of Social Services and chairperson of the allocations committee of the QAC United Way. Treasurer for husband's campaign. Born and reared in Knoxville, Tennessee. Direct descendant of James White, founder of Knoxville.

I want the members of The Kent Island Heritage Society to know that I am very proud to be a member of the Board of Directors and will do my very best to serve the members of the Society and support the KIHS projects.

for Kent Island Day and/or eligible Kent Island High School seniors please pass along the forms to them.

And finally, a note of appreciation to Mr. Howard Johnson who answered our call for appropriate merchandise for the Kirwan Store Museum with his donation of three antique lanterns and two saws.

### FRANCES L. PETERS

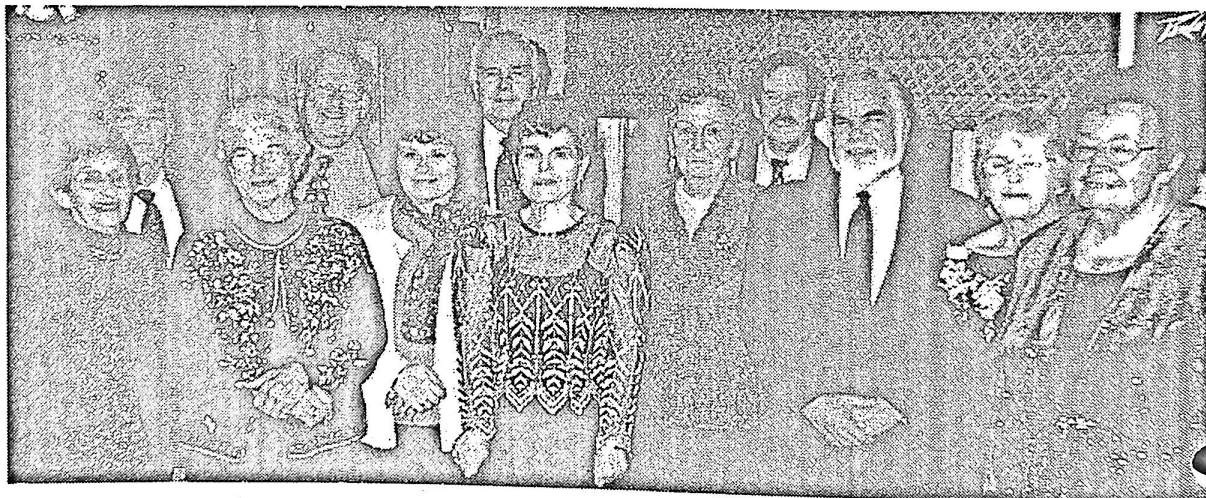
I guess you could call me a "new-comer" to the Eastern Shore. I have lived in Maryland for about 20 years and on the Eastern Shore for 10. I was born a Texan. Lived there my first 21 years. Married a Pennsylvanian and moved to the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area where we raised three children. After the children were grown we parted company. I moved around a bit but came back to the East where my daughter and son lived.

In 1983 my daughter and her husband were transferred to Maryland. I moved too. I found work with the State of Maryland as a clerk-typist and worked at that until I retired in 1994.

Since that time I held a part-time job with The Wildfowl Trust of North America in Grasonville and summer jobs at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, and Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado. At present I am a weekend travel counselor at the Chesapeake Exploration Center in Chester. I have volunteered at Adkins Arboretum in Ridgely and at the Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage in Easton.

My interests are birdwatching, walking, photography, elderhostel programs and The Kent Island Heritage Society.

*Nancy Cook*



New Board Members, left to right: Florence Dunn, Dan Hopkins, Fran Peters, Richard Sossi (guest speaker), Janet Denny, Butch Collier, Nancy Cook, Myrtle Bruscup, Forrest Chisman, Jack Broderick, Flora Sossi, Audrey Hawkins.

# ● Language 'Burier'

By Skeeter Philpot

**W**e were across the bridge at my wife's Christmas party. Nice big colonial in a brand new subdivision. From the upstairs bathroom window you could look directly into the neighbor's bathroom window. There wasn't thirty feet between houses. Tighter than two coats of paint.

I was standing in a basement rec room with a group of men, mostly Tammy Sam's co-workers. We were watching a boxing match on cable and taking full advantage of the mini-buffet that was set up downstairs for the more anti-social partygoers. Upstairs they were singing karaoke. Don't even get me started on karaoke. Let me just say this—it's a privilege, not a right.

Anyway, I'm standing there next to this guy who stops stuffing crabballs in his maw long enough to say something about starting to get fat. My wife's boss, Conrad Mann says, "Fat as

his paycheck." They all laugh. One of the other guys goes, "Fat as one of his triple chili cheeseburgers." Again, laughs. Almost as reflex, I mutter, "Fat as Buck Jones' pony."

These guys looked at me like the kid from "Deliverance" was sitting on my shoulders playing fiddle. They grilled me mockingly. "Who in the world was Buck Jones? Why was his pony so fat? Where could they see Buck Jones' fat pony?" I had to admit I didn't know the answers to their questions. It was just something I've heard all my life. I've heard a lot of sayings like that. Fat as duck butter. Harder than Chinese arithmetic. Slipperier than eel snot. Some of these phrases can't even be repeated in public because they take the Lord's, plus everybody from the president's to the DNR man's, name in vain. On the way home my

wife promised that after the holidays she would attempt to prove to her associates that I'm a smart and multi-talented modern man—even if my name is Skeeter.

I started thinking about the times I've been judged because of the way I talk. In fourth grade we had a new science teacher from out of state. He berated me for 20 minutes because he said he had no idea what I was talking about when I said "oy-le and wooder don't mix." Of course the joke was on him. Not one kid in that class knew for sure what he meant by either 'oy-uhl' or 'wahter.'

When I was in the military, I told a friend that a superior had more stuff with him than Carter had liver pills. The superior overheard but was oblivious to what I meant. The friend called me 'Liver Pills' for the next three years.

Couple summers ago, I

said "Hi, ya'll." to a group of people I passed in a Kent Narrows parking lot. This lady turned and pointed at me, hollering, "He said, ya'll! Ya'll!" If she'd had a net I think she would've tried to snag me for the circus. Luckily, I was the one with the net—a dip net. Burle had dropped his cell phone overboard.

I had to laugh. Almost every time something like that happens, instead of being overly embarrassed, I'm oddly proud. Being isolated, our Eastern Shore ancestors carried their accents and colloquialisms for generations. In this era where everything from our speech patterns to the restaurants we eat in have been standardized, I like that I probably sound more like my great grandfather than I do the TV weatherman.

And that's all she wrote.

---

*Skeeter Philpot thinks the rest of ya'll talk funny.*

## GREETINGS FROM KIRWAN HOUSE

Greg Nizza, Caretaker

Winter has certainly been at full strength here at the Kirwan House. Cold winter winds and temperatures harken back to Victorian times when the Victorians would outfit their homes to withstand winter. Thick rugs, heavy draperies, and weatherproofing were all techniques used by the Victorians to keep out colds and drafts. And I'm still using these techniques today.

Potbelly and parlor stoves burned wood and then coal and kept servants

and dwellers busy all through the winter months. I'm doing my best to stay away from the North side of the house and stay upstairs where it is warmer.

With this year's cold weather and ice and snow, there has not been much opportunity to get out in the yard and prepare the back fields for bushhogging and cutting.

In its heyday, the Kirwan Farm operated a lumber yard that shipped lumber up and down Kirwan Creek from a landing back behind the Kirwan House. Overgrown over the years, our plans are to clear out the area that originally led to the landing out back. This will be done by spring to enable us to

reclaim areas that once held barns and other outbuildings.

Inside the Kirwan House, we received donations of several old lanterns and saws as well as a potbelly stove for the Kirwan Store.

The KIHS Board will hold a retreat at the Kirwan House in March where we will plan many of the projects targeted for the Kirwan property. We look forward to springtime when the weather warms and we will be able to open the doors again to the Kirwan Store and let more people see how commerce operated before there were 7-11's and Wal-Marts.

# Kent Island Firsts

By Brent Lewis

**K**ent Island was the first English settlement in what eventually became the state of Maryland. Established in 1631, we're predated in these United States by only Jamestown, Virginia, and Plymouth, Massachusetts. Having been around as long as we have, we've tucked a few other 'firsts' under our collective belt.

William Claiborne's fort, windmill and trader sheds were Maryland's first, but he also established the state's first boatyard. It was here *The Long Tayle* was built. This pinnacle is said to be the first ship constructed from native wood to set sail upon the Chesapeake Bay.

Claiborne going to war with the Calverts for control of Kent Island brought the Chesapeake's

first documented acts of piracy and blood spilled in naval combat. Claiborne's men were accused of illegally seizing a Maryland trade ship early in April 1635.

Before the month was out, tensions came to a head. On the 23rd Claiborne's crew onboard the sloop *Cockatrice* attempted to take another of Lord Baltimore's ships, but was surprised by an unseen second vessel. Four men died in the ensuing battle. That day's violence was also the first incident in this country of naval battle between English-speaking combatants.

The first woman in this country's history to appeal for suffrage was Margaret Brent. And she was at least a part-time Kent Islander from 1638-1640 while her brother, Giles, served as commander for the

Calverts. A landowner and confidante of Lord Baltimore, she petitioned the state assembly for the right to vote in 1648. Though denied, Margaret Brent took the first step in this country's long march toward a more democratic society.

Kent Island's Broad Creek was the first town in what became Queen Anne's County. Perhaps the first on the Eastern Shore. Now a bit further north and called Stevensville, Broad Creek was the natural spot for locals to conduct business because of its central location on the island's bay side and proximity to a safe harbor.

As was typical for colonial towns, Broad Creek probably centered around our county's first church, courthouse and tavern. Christ Church was

that first church. This historic house of worship is also the first Anglican Church in Maryland and the state's longest active congregation. Though the church's location has changed a few times over the last 373 years, the flock remained. The original Christ Church site is one of the few places where we're certain the first generations of Kent Islanders lived their lives.

Here at the beginning of this new, always faster paced millennium we're living in, more than ever it is in our best interest to respect and maintain such historic sites. Once we lose those connections to our past, we've lost them forever.

And we'll never truly be first again.

*The Kent Island Heritage Society has lost a very special friend*

## IN MEMORIAM

**ROLAND O. BRUSCUP**  
JANUARY 21, 2004

*The society is very thankful for the interest and support shown over the years by this member of our organization and our community. We will continue to honor his memory by discovering, identifying, restoring and preserving the heritage of Kent Island.*

## Kent Island Day

**Saturday, May 15**

**Rain Date, May 16**



## Historic Cemeteries

*Continued from page 1*

family descendants have moved or died and thus they are not listed in the three published volumes of "Cemeteries in Queen Anne's County" or in any of the files that are continually updated and kept by the Kent Island Heritage Society.

Legal issues are involved when these internment sites are knowingly disturbed in any manner; it is a criminal act to desecrate any burial ground.

Two years ago bulldozers at a building site had started to disturb the ground where there had been family plots and calls were made to The Kent Island Heritage Society, which attempted to halt the project. Apparently all procedures had been followed according to the state required laws, but neither the families involved nor The Heritage Society were consulted in the preparation of the building site. As a result, The Society sent a letter to the Queen Anne's County State's Attorney requesting that it be notified of any planned developments where gravesites might exist. A subsequent request was made of the present State's Attorney's office.

At this writing The Heritage Society has received several calls from citizens concerned about the purposed Parks and Recreation extension to the Cross Island Trail, which could impinge on prior gravesites. The State Highway Administration's archeologist, the Historic Sites Consortium and the Maryland Historic Trust have been notified and are responding to these citizens' concerns.

The Kent Island Heritage Society's role in situations such as these is to provide a resource for those searching for sites where their ancestors may have been interred and to relate this information to appropriate agencies when requested. The identification of such sites is an ongoing project for there are so many of these sites on Kent Island—there may be one in anyone's backyard. The Society would like to record all such burial sites and make the information available—family listings, dates, etc. It is illegal to disturb a known gravesite.

It is imperative and should be the immediate responsibility of the des-

cendants who are aware of these sites to clear and provide adequate protection for the remaining gravestones. This must be done before bulldozers start their work; Kent Island native families need to be ever vigilant.

Kent Island has a rich history of historic places and people, and we must do all we can to preserve that heritage.

*Reprint of an article published by The Bay Times on Jan. 28, 2004.*

### Welcome New Members

Kevin and DeeDee McCracken  
Stevensville, Md.

Harold and Marilyn Wilson  
Chester, Md.

### The Kent Island Heritage Society VOLUNTEER

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer in the areas of:

☐ Docent

☐ Research

☐ Writing

☐ Grant writer

☐ Publicity coordinator

☐ Event organizer

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 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*



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

**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.  
e-mail: jlbanner@myshorelink.com