



Kensington Historical Society - 1977

KHS Meeting Tuesday, Feb. 12 WAY BACK WHEN!

We welcome, for the first time on our stage, Ted Rosche and Emily Robinson! Come and enjoy this animated dialogue and see 1900 Kensington life unfold before your eyes through slides and letters of Kensington at the turn of the last Century. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. in the Kensington Town Hall, 3710 Mitchell Street, Kensington, MD. Come early for coffee beginning at 7:00 p.m.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Mark May 13, 2008 on your calendars for our Spring meeting with a very special presentation on the history of the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department.

April 27, 2008 is the "International Day of the Book" Festival. Plan to volunteer at our booth and enjoy the Festival.

MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES EXPAND

The Board voted at their October 23 meeting to offer in addition to Individual (\$20) and Family (\$25) memberships, the following categories: Business (small & non-profit) \$75, Corporation \$100, lifetime (individual and family) one-time payment of \$500. These changes were made in response to direct requests and to encourage the active participation of local churches, organizations and corporations.

Notes from the President

By Julie O'Malley

It's been a long time since our last newsletter, so there's a lot to catch up on. KHS has been busy! Hopefully you've seen notices in the *Gazette*, posters around town, and flyers in the Town Newsletter about some of our activities.

We are very grateful for the huge success of our "Kensington Style Road Show" in October - thanks to our Co-Presidents Elisenda Sola-Sole and Steve Cohen and all their helpers! We hope to hold this again next year. What a great way to tie our residential and business community together!

Our Oral History Committee has completed a questionnaire and a procedures outline and has begun taking histories.

In November we displayed a selection of toys from the **Isabelle Barr Collection at the Noyes Library** and will have another exhibit in February at the Kensington Park Library.

Our **Holiday Party** for members at the home of Angie and Dennis Kilcullen was held in December as was our **Holiday Concert** at the Town Hall, with Wat Stewart presenting the voices of the Augmented Eight.

The Society takes an active role on the town's **Warner Circle Committee**. The Montgomery County Dept. of Parks is sending out a Request For Proposal

(RFP) for use and hopes to include as large an audience as possible. Additional addresses should be sent to Brenda Sandburg (Brenda.Sandberg@mncppc-mc.org), of the County's Legacy Open Space Program, immediately.

The Society has also been actively following up on the restoration of the **Kensington Cabin** (oldest remaining cabin in the park system) on Kensington Parkway. We hope to see some activity there soon.

KHS RECEIVES GRANT! The Historical Society has received a grant from the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission to help reprint and expand our Kensington Walking Tour. It has to be completed by December 31, 2008. This is a project which will need researches and artists. We welcome any who would like to be a part of this effort. Please call 240-423-2827, and thanks.

Winter is with us for several more months. Our projects are ongoing and there are many opportunities for you to participate. Meet new neighbors and contribute to the history of your community! Please come to our meeting on February 12 to learn more. Email us at info@kensingtonhistory.org, or call 301-942-8933 with questions.

Recent Donations from History Patrons

KHS is always pleased to receive donations to its Archives. If you have photos to contribute, we would be happy to copy them and return the originals.

- ♦ A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland by Richard MacMaster & Ray Hiebert from Bill Offutt.
- ♦ A collection of photo portraits - Howard Avenue shopkeepers - by Patti Grossman.
- ♦ Monetary donations from Bill Maury, Harry Bean, Dorothy Warthen.
- ♦ An oral history given by Harry Bean who grew up in Kensington in the 30's.
- ♦ A 1941 photo of Mr. Trowbridge in front of his pharmacy on Howard Avenue from Dan Hayes.



Special equipment was brought in for painting.



The Carriage House on the Manor grounds



The original colors were painstakingly researched.

**Our thanks to the
Montgomery County Parks
Department for the great job
they're doing on the Manor
and the grounds!**

Photos courtesy of John Doherty

THRILLING RIDES

A side story to THE KENSINGTON LINE

By Harry Bean

Sometime in 1935 after the secession of street car operations on the Kensington Line, my friend, Gilbert Raynor and I "borrowed" a decrepit, former street car line four-wheeled flat car from a small Kensington junk yard. We tied it on the end of a long rope and dragged it noisily behind Dad's '28 Dodge on the streets to "Gilly's" house. He lived on Frederick Ave. close to the car tracks. His driveway became the "carbarn". We rebuilt the wood deck and greased the axle bearings. It had an eye at each end for a coupling bar or a chain.. It lacked brakes, so we devised a sprag brake out of a 2x4 with a pivot bolt into the side frame. The short end was levered against a wheel.

Now the abandoned car line had a very slight downgrade all the way from Gilly's house, about a mile, to the Rock Creek trestle. From there the tracks ran up a fairly steep grade all the way to the end of the street in North Chevy Chase. We push/pulled the car up the hill using the rope and a push pole. It was hard work! The trip down around the curves to the trestle was about a half mile, and it was a thrilling ride. We guessed that we got up to 40 or 50 miles per hour by the time we reached the trestle. It got up enough speed that it would coast well over a quarter mile beyond the trestle.

Just north of Rock Creek the tracks had been crossed by an extension of Rock Creek Drive, a narrow, two-lane, paved road (not shown on this early map). We were fortunate that we never encountered an auto at this grade crossing. There were no longer any warning signs on the road, and the brakes on our flat car certainly were not capable of stopping in time had the need arisen.

We did have one very scary event on a downhill ride. Tales of our "trolley" rides had attracted considerable attention among the boys of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. We occasionally invited friends to come over for Saturday rides. On one occasion one of our

"friends" unbeknownst to us placed some rocks between the running rail and the inside guard rail on the sharpest curve about midway on the downhill run. There were four or five of us on the flat that day. When I saw the rocks I knew we were in serious trouble. We bounced over the first one or two. Then the car jumped the track and crashed dead center into a trolley pole. How we all survived that crash with no one being killed or seriously injured, I'll never know. We got off with only scrapes and bruises. Needless to say the kid who thought he would give us a thrill was never invited back!

We rebuilt the wood deck afterwards and continued occasional rides. At one time a gang from North Chevy Chase stole the car from Gilly's driveway and dumped it off the trestle. Later Gilly dived in, tied a rope to it, and I pulled it out with the '28 Dodge. I'm glad Dad never knew how I got his car down to the creek to pull the flat out and get the car back on the road from there.

Eventually, we lost interest in these rides, and when the flat car was again taken and dumped into the creek, we just left it. A bit of Kensington Railway history undoubtedly remains there to this day.

(Written for the El Paso Street Car Historical Society. Reproduced with permission of Harry Bean.)

This past fall, Harry Bean agreed to give us an oral history while visiting from Texas. He had lived in Kensington in the thirties and early forties on Prospect Street and his parents continued living there another 20 years. He sent the Society this article in hopes that many Kensingtonians would find it amusing. I'm not sure they'd get very far with activities like this today!

***We are sad to announce
the passing of Charter
Member Virginia
Humphreys on
January 18, 2008.***

KHS PRESIDENT RECEIVES AWARD

By John Doherty

It is my happy duty to report that our own KHS President, Julia O'Malley (aka "Julie") was honored by Preservation Maryland as recipient of the 2007 George T. Harrison Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service in behalf of Historic Preservation in Maryland.

Julie was cited for her past service as Chair of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, current service as President of the Kensington Historical Society, and her countless hours of volunteer service on behalf of KHS, the Town of Kensington, Montgomery County and the State of Maryland. We are all very proud of this well deserved

recognition of Julie's dedication and service--all in a volunteer capacity! Congratulations to Julie and thanks to all who helped in this project.

The award was presented to Julie November 16, 2007 at Preservation Maryland's Annual Meeting in Baltimore.



Kensington Historical Society, Inc.
P.O.Box 453
Kensington, MD 20895
301-942-8933
www.kensingtonhistory.org
Email: info@kensingtonhistory.org

OFFICERS

President: Julie O'Malley
Vice President: Steve Cohen and Elisenda Sola-Sole
Recording Secretary: Leanne Pfautz
Corresponding Secretary: Daisy Whittemore
Treasurer: James Mathias
Immediate Past President: Bill Maury

BOARD MEMBERS:

Ann Pfautz: Archives/Local History
Toni Ward & Gary Ditto: Membership
Gary Ditto: Newsletter (prep & layout)
OPEN: Newsletter Coordinator
John Doherty: Preservation Committee
Barrie Carr & Duane Rollins: Social Events
Janet Barnes: Calendar Committee
Wat Stewart: Concerts
OPEN: Fundraising Committee
Jack Gaffe
Barry Peoples
Stuart Cohen
Barbara Scharman

*Thanks to
ANGIE AND DENNIS KILCULLEN (AND FAMILY)
for hosting our Holiday Party this year. We had a spectacular turn-out with ninety-one members attending. Thanks to all who made the party such a huge success!*

KENSINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2007 MEMBERSHIP FORM
(Please send completed form and payment to KHS, PO Box 453, Kensington, MD 20895)

I would like to join the Kensington Historical Society (Jan-Dec 2008)
 Please renew my current membership (Jan-Dec 2008)

Check your mailing label for current membership status.

NAME(S): _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: _____
E-MAIL: _____

Lived in Kensington since (year): _____

Individual (\$20.00)
Family (\$25.00)
Business (Small and Non-profit) (\$75.00)
Corporation (\$100.00)
LIFETIME (Individual or Family) (\$500.00)

Total Enclosed: _____

I am interested in helping on the following committees: (Please check)
 PROGRAMS MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER SOCIALS ARCHIVES
 CONCERTS PRESERVATION CALENDAR

Safeway Reopens

By Julie O'Malley

Having a Safeway in Kensington goes back to the forties. In fact, Kensington has always had a grocery store. This is an important feature of any small town and everyone has enjoyed this convenience in Kensington at one time or another.

The first Safeway was located on Howard Avenue where 3758 Howard Ave is today. In the fifties a "more modern" building was built directly on Connecticut Avenue. By 1964 it was replaced by a larger version on the same property but facing Howard Avenue again. Our newest Safeway faces Connecticut, although owing to the location of the Shell Station, it's built at the rear of the lot. During the planning period (over 10 years) there were many debates, reviews, suggestions, complaints, and opinions expressed.

We now have a new Safeway in place. A community that is interested in its buildings, in its history, in its direction of change, is a strong community. I am thankful that I live in a community like Kensington.

ISABELLE BARR TOY COLLECTION

In response to the many requests, the Historical Society will be displaying another selection of Toys, this time at the Kensington Park Library.



When Isabelle Barr donated her collection of toys to the town, it was her hope that the children of Kensington could continue to enjoy them. Please stop by to see them during the month of February.



Kensington Historical Society
PO Box 453
Kensington, MD 20895

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS
NEXT KENSINGTON HISTORICAL
SOCIETY MEETING
TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 12, 2008
7:00 p.m. Coffee
7:30 p.m. Meeting
Kensington Town Hall