



Kensington Historical Society - 1977

KHS Meeting

Tuesday, May 13

History of the KVFD

Tour at 6:30 pm

Meeting at 7:30 pm

Our next program will highlight the history of the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department, and what better place to learn about it, than AT THE FIRE HOUSE? Thanks to historians Jean Ward and Juan Bofill, we'll have a tour of the building - including trucks, so bring the kids! We'll have a presentation by Mr. Bofill on his research into the origins of the fire service in the Town of Kensington, as well as details on some of their current projects. This will include a slide presentation from their archives. **Come at 6:30 pm for the tour followed by refreshments. At 7:30 pm we will have our program after a brief meeting.** All are welcome and parking is plentiful. (From Plyers Mill: turn right before the guardrail to enter the lot behind the firehouse. From Connecticut: turn right in the drive before the KVFD building, just after the Graffiti and Copy Center building.)



Treasure in Our Backyard

By Mabel Baker, alumni parent, 1957-62

The best kept "secret" in Kensington, which needs to be revealed, is the Kensington Nursery School, a cooperative since 1939. Nestled in a quiet neighborhood of Kensington Heights at the end of a one-block street is a small entrance street to this treasure hidden from view of the busy wayside traffic. The school began when a group of mothers in North Chevy Chase brought their preschool children together for a Play Group. At first they met in individual homes. The group expanded; they hired a teacher and became the Kensington Cooperative Nursery School. They rented space over the years--in the nearby Warner Memorial Presbyterian Church, the (former) Kensington Junior High School, the parish house of the Episcopal Church, then located at the corner of Knowles Ave. and Lincoln Avenue (now Connecticut), and the Garrett Park Recreation Center. Moving from one location to another was costly and frustrating. Next they found space behind the drug store and post office in the Masonic Lodge Building. At that time the play yard was behind McKeever's Ice Cream Store, and parents were concerned about the trucks that were driven through the yard. In May of 1945, the "co-oping" mothers voted to place \$75 into a building fund for a home of their own. The fund grew to \$2500, and two lots were purchased near Pearson Street. In preparation for buying the property, the Kensington Cooperative Nursery School was dissolved and its assets transferred to the Kensington Nursery School, Inc. on May 2, 1955.

The school was meeting at the Homewood Recreation Center in 1957 when a decision was made to proceed with a long-time dream to build their own building. To help finance the construction of the building, the housing committee

sold \$25 bonds at two percent interest for six years. Alexander Richter, father of a former student, designed the building, and John Minogue of the Miller and Minogue Company was the builder. Among the dignitaries attending the ground breaking on April 1, 1957, were: Judge Noyes; Stella Werner of the County Council; Lewis Meriam, the mayor of Kensington; Mrs. Houdlette from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, representatives from the Kensington and Wheaton Chambers of Commerce; and representatives from the News Advertiser, the Maryland News, the Record, and WGAY. A generous loan was extended by the Farmers Banking and Trust Company of Montgomery County (now M & T Bank). Parents and friends of the students did a lot of the finishing work. New families coming into the school were asked to buy a bond, and these bonds, plus fund-raising, paid off the bonds as they came due. The building was occupied in mid-September of 1957, and the mortgage was paid in full in 1968.

It was truly a cooperative with required attendance at business meetings. The school opened with all the parents taking turns as carpool drivers, teacher assistants, "housekeepers" (included cleaning the toilets), caretakers of the building and lawn, etc. The only paid employees were Mrs. John B. Buck, teacher-director and Mrs. Marjorie Johnson, teacher. By 1960, the school was opened to the neighborhood with a celebration, a Silver Tea. There were former members of the original Play Group present; and a certificate for a month's free tuition was awarded to 13-month-old David R. Davis, the first baby born to a "graduate" of the school.

In 1989 the Kensington Nursery

Minutes of the April 15th Kensington Historical Society Membership Meeting

Respectfully submitted by: Leanne Pfautz, KHS Recording Secretary

Emily Robinson and Ted Rosche presented an informative program, *Way Back When*, highlighting the history of Kensington from 1880 to 1910. The audience of over 70 people was treated to excerpts from letters written during that time period, illustrated with slides.

After the program, President O'Malley welcomed everyone to the April Membership Meeting and thanked Emily and Ted for their excellent research and presentation. Julie reported that Barry Peoples attended the retirement gala for Eileen McGuckian, Executive Director of Peerless Rockville. Barry presented Eileen with a Certificate of Appreciation for her many years of dedication to County preservation, and KHS gave a donation to the Eileen McGuckian Preservation Fund. Julie also reported that the Society had made a donation to the Mary Kay Harper Center for Suburban Studies to honor Ms. Harper as she retires after 18 years as Executive Director of the Montgomery County Historical Society. KHS will present her with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Co-Vice President Steve Cohen announced the next program on May 13th, where Juan Boful of the Kensington Fire Department will report on the history of the Fire Dept with slides and a tour at the Fire House. Julie said there is plenty of parking at the Fire House so asked that everyone encourage neighbors and friends to attend.

Julie welcomed the Society's new Treasurer Detta Voesar and thanked Jim Mathias for a job well done. She noted that the Summer Concert Series will continue. Julie thanked Barbara Scharman for submitting an application to the Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council for grant funds to help support the Concert Series.

Kathy Knepper made an announcement about the new book available this fall, *Spirit of Methodism in Kensington 1885-2007, History of a Church in a Village*. It covers the history of St. Paul's Methodist Church and also recounts a lot of the Town history. Orders are being taken now.

Julie said that a date has not yet been set for moving the Society archives into new quarters across the hall at Town Hall. She thanked Dan Hayes for his recent donation of photos.

John Doherty gave an update on Warner Circle, saying that the Parks Department has sent out the Request for Proposals (RFP). The deadline for submission is April 29.

Co-Vice President Elisenda Sola-Sole encouraged all to attend the Day of the Book festival on April 27th and asked for volunteers to man the KHS table.

Julie reported that the Society has received the grant for expanding the Walking Tour, and we need researchers to help. She noted that the Society is looking for a chair for the oral histories project.

Julie thanked Elisenda Sola-Sole for volunteering to chair the Garden Party. A date has not yet been set but June 21st is an option. It has not yet been decided whether the party should take place at Warner Circle or Clum-Kennedy Park. Julie asked that those interested in helping with the garden party sign-up or let her know.

Finally, Julie thanked Janet Barnes for taking care of refreshments and Gary Ditto, Ann Pfautz, Toni Ward and Bill Maury for the cookies. She also thanked St. Paul's for donating the meeting space and Tracy Furman for facilitating the event.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A Tribute to Eileen McGuckian and Mary Kay Harper!

Eileen McGuckian is retiring from Peerless Rockville, where she has been serving as Executive Director since 1982. Eileen helped to organize our fledgling Historical Society and was one of our first program speakers in 1977. She's been a special friend to Kensington; overseeing the collecting and printing of the complete collections of photographs by Kensington's own, Malcolm Walter, and helping to launch the historic Higgins Cemetery Foundation. Thanks to Barry Peoples for presenting the Society's Certificate of Appreciation at her Tribute March 16th.

Mary Kay Harper is retiring from 18 years as Executive Director of the Montgomery County Historical Society. She was a strong and guiding force, developing the Society into a resource for all preservation organizations in the county. Her retirement festivities will be at the Montgomery County Historical Society's Annual Meeting May 4th, at which past KHS President, TJ O'Malley, will present our KHS Certificate of Appreciation.

The Kensington Historical Society has made \$100 donations to the Eileen McGuckian Preservation Fund and the Mary Kay Harper Center for Suburban Studies.

Thanks to you both for setting the bar for excellence in preservation organizations!

See www.montgomeryhistory.org and www.peerlessrockville.org for more information.



KHS President O'Malley receives \$500 check from Safeway's Gregory Ten Eyck at the store's Grand Opening as Delegate Al Carr, Councilmember Nancy Floreen, and County Executive Ike Leggett look on. The Society received this donation in support of its research on the Town's history and early Town photographs including those which are displayed in the front lobby of the store.



Safeway on Howard Ave., c. 1940s

State Grants Approved For Warner Circle Park

By John Doherty

Kensington-area legislators have secured \$250,000 in state grants for the Warner Circle Legacy Open Space Park and Manor.

State Senator Richard Madaleno, along with District 18 Delegates Al Carr, Ana Sol Gutierrez and Jeff Waldstreicher, shepherded the grants through the recently-concluded session of the Maryland Legislature. The measures are part of an omnibus park funding bill signed by Governor Martin O'Malley on April 24.

Meanwhile, the County Parks and Planning Commission has extended the submittal deadline for parties interested in applying to lease and rehabilitate the Manor and Carriage House. The new deadline is May 28. Interested parties should contact Jana M. Harris at (301) 454-1603 or online at Jana.Harris@MNCPPC.org.

We wish to thank Jim Mathias for his fine work keeping the Society's funds in order and we welcome Detta Voesar as our new Treasurer.

The community is invited to the Kensington Historical Society's

MID-SUMMER'S DAY LAWN PARTY

*June 21, 2008
2 to 5 p.m.*

*Warner Circle
10231 Carroll Place*

\$10 for adults, \$5 for children

*RSVP to
Mabel Baker*

*10225 Kensington Pkwy, #403
Kensington, MD 20895*

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OFFICERS

President: Julie O'Malley
Vice President: Steve Cohen and Elisenda Sola-Sole
Recording Secretary: Leanne Pfautz
Corresponding Secretary: Daisy Whittemore
Treasurer: Detta Voesar
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: Oral History Chair
Jack Gaffe
Barry Peoples
Stuart Cohen
Barbara Scharman
Jim Mathias

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

Treasures, from page 1

School staff invited all the previous alumni to a 50th Anniversary Celebration. By that time, the school used a "database" and invitations went out around the country, bringing many of the parents who were present at the ground-breaking ceremonies of the school and more recent alumni.

The present school has seen many changes. There is an increase of membership which now includes two-year-olds, as well as three- and four-year-olds and there are morning and afternoon sessions. The parents are still involved in caring for the building. The parking lot has been enlarged and an outside storage shed has been added, as well as a new large playhouse in the school's yard. Many shelves and storage areas have increased the efficiency of space, and a favorite addition in each classroom is a loft. The entry hall is lined with bookcases and "cubbies," all built by participating fathers. Children's artwork decorates the hallway.

The parents have staged fundraising functions that are open to the public, most recently silent auctions, with entertainment and refreshments. In 2008, a 50th anniversary of the Nursery School

building was held at the Town Hall in Kensington. The vision is to add a multi-purpose room which would provide space for children's active play in inclement weather, as well as for

The goal of the Kensington Nursery School has been and is to provide a safe, clean, fascinating environment for our children, giving them the opportunity to explore and experiment, to interact with their peers, and to grow socially, intellectually, and artistically to their highest potential.

The Kensington Nursery School is the first Cooperative in the County and a pioneer in forming the Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools. It is the only cooperative nursery school in the county to own its own building. The community can feel proud and treasure the accomplishments of the teachers and parents who continue to foster the spirit of cooperation and love of caring for children.

Sources: Kensington Nursery School, A Cooperative Since Nineteen Thirty-nine, a History by Rebecca Scheirer, alumni parent, 1986-89

*Other sources: <http://www.knscoop.org/>
Interview with Teacher-director Helene Segal-Turner*

SPONSORS NEEDED FOR 2009 CALENDAR

KHS is looking for business sponsors for their 2009 calendar. If you'd like to be a sponsor by having your ad included in the calendar, please email info@kensingtonhistory.org.

Thank you for your support!

We are saddened by the passing of former KHS Secretary Edna Godberson.

SEE THE KENSINGTON NURSERY SCHOOL IN THE LABOR DAY PARADE!

**Kensington Historical Society
PO Box 453
Kensington, MD 20895**

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
NEXT KENSINGTON HISTORICAL
SOCIETY MEETING**

**AT THE FIRE HOUSE!
TUESDAY,
MAY 13, 2008**

**6:30 p.m. KVFD Tour
7:30 p.m. Meeting**

**Kensington Volunteer Fire Department
(corner of Plyers Mill Rd. & Connecticut Ave.)**