



ABOUT TOWN

News, events and resources for Kensington Historical Society members and friends

PO Box 453, Kensington MD 20895 October 2010

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KHS Membership



Join today! Membership form for new & returning members.

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October 12, 2010 Meeting: Speaker Mary van Balgooy

By Janet Barnes

Our speaker for October is Mary van Balgooy, Executive Director of Peerless Rockville. **The meeting will be held Tuesday, October 12, 2010 at the Kensington Town Hall/Armory, ground floor, beginning with coffee at 7:00 p.m.** Chestnut Lodge and Frieda's Cottage are historic landmarks in the City of Rockville. Originally built as the Woodlawn Hotel in 1889, the hotel was converted to a private sanatorium for the care of nervous and mental diseases and renamed Chestnut Lodge in 1920. Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann treated patients and lived in "Frieda's Cottage," which is now in use as a private home. This is an intriguing story of history, personalities, and adaptive reuse of property.

Save the Dates for our Upcoming General Meetings

October 12
November 9

St. Paul's United Methodist Church Celebrates 125 Years of Service to the Kensington Area

By Emily Robinson

In 1885, the Methodists who lived in Knowles Station (the former name of Kensington)

decided to build a church. William Wheatley, who owned a large farm north of the B&O railroad, gave land for the church on the southeast corner of what is now Plyers Mill Road and St. Paul Street. In those early days, it was the only church in town, so concerts, festivals and suppers were held there and it provided a center for social life. In fact, the steeple bell was the only large bell in Knowles Station, so when there was a fire or other emergency, the church bell was rung.

Over the years, they moved to their second sanctuary on the corner of Fawcett and Mitchell Streets, bought more land there, and built an educational building in 1954. Their third sanctuary was built in 1958, sustained a fire in 1966, and was rebuilt to serve as an assembly hall and dining venue with kitchen. In 1967 a new

sanctuary was built facing Armory Avenue and a parking lot added on the north side. Renovations to lighting, sound and chancel space were made in 2009 and the sounds of the renovated and expanded organ will soon be heard again.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of Methodism in Kensington. On November 7th there will be a celebration at the single service of the day at 10 am, followed by festivities. Plans are not complete yet, but watch the church message board by the parking lot for more information. The congregation follows a long tradition of connecting to Kensington neighbors and friends; in that spirit, they invite all to participate in their joyful celebration.

Questions may be addressed to the church office: stpaulsunited@verizon.net. Please put "125 Anniversary" on the subject line.

An Update on The Noyes Children's Library

By Sheila Dinn



The Noyes Children's Library doors are open right now due to the Noyes Children's Library

Foundation's commitment to raise \$70,000 toward the

FY'11 budget. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** Please donate, volunteer, come to our exciting events, and spread the word! Visit www.noyeslibraryfoundation.org to donate, or send checks, made payable to the Noyes Children's Library Foundation, to PO Box 31, Kensington, MD 20895.

"Make Some Noyes" Dance Parties

Families are invited to "Make Some Noyes" at a series of fabulous dance parties to help save the Noyes Children's Library in Kensington, Maryland. With a DJ playing favorite children's dance tunes you can dance the afternoon away with

storybook characters, local children's dance groups, balloons, photo ops, and face painting, with concessions and Noyes t-shirts available for sale. Cost is \$10 per person with a maximum charge of \$25 per family. (Non-walkers are free. There will be a small charge for balloons, face-painting, family photos and snacks.)

Mark your calendar for:

- Saturday, October 16, 2010, 3-5pm - Wear a Halloween costume for an outdoor party at Warner Circle, next to Noyes Children's Library (10237 Carroll Pl., Kensington, MD 20895) Rain date: Saturday, October 23, 2010, 3-5pm
- Saturday, November 27, 2010, 3-5pm - Work off that Thanksgiving feast at Kensington Town Hall (3710 Mitchell St., Kensington, MD 20895)

- Saturday, December 18, 2010, 3-5pm - Rock out during the holidays at Kensington Town Hall (3710 Mitchell St., Kensington, MD 20895)
- Saturday, January 22, 2011, 3-5pm - Boogie in the new year at Kensington Town Hall (3710 Mitchell St., Kensington, MD 20895)

For more information on the dance parties, please visit www.noyeslibraryfoundation.org or contact Cyndy Cecil-Bragg at 917-714-0694 or 301-949-2090 orcyndy@goodjobproductions.com.

Some Enchanted Evening: A Benefit for the Noyes Children's Library

A magical night of dancing and dining will benefit the Noyes Children's Library Foundation. SOME ENCHANTED EVENING: A Benefit for the Noyes Children's Library, will be held on Friday, November 5, 2010, at Glen Echo Park's Spanish Ballroom (7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo, Maryland), 8-11PM. Congressman Christopher Van Hollen, along with Grammy award-winning musicians Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer, are honorary chairs for the fundraising gala. Partygoers will be treated to the best of ballroom dancing: demonstrations, instruction and opportunities to waltz, swing and more, all led by "Mad Hot Ballroom" star Alex Tchassov and partner Sally Blenkey-Tchassova, along with the Radio King Orchestra. The evening also includes a silent auction of one-of-a-kind items and opportunities, with a light buffet, dessert and wine. Proceeds from the gala will go directly to efforts to save the historic Noyes Children's Library, located in Kensington, Maryland. Tickets cost \$75 per person.

For more information on the gala, please visit www.noyeslibraryfoundation.org, call 301-949-3446 or email Ramona Gann at rhgann1@aol.com.

The Warner Diaries: Nuggets of Kensington History

By John Doherty, KHS Preservation Chairman

Diaries kept by two daughters of Kensington founder and developer Brainard Warner have been acquired by the Special Collections Research Center of Swem Library at the College of William and Mary in Virginia.

The dairies are said to paint a portrait of life among the rich and famous in Kensington during the Gilded Age of America at the turn of the 20th century -- up into the Jazz Age of Charles Lindbergh and the Roaring 1920's.

Presidents, senators, diplomats--and domestic servants, are among the cast of characters appearing in the papers, with "many stories" set at the Warners' summer manor and estate in Kensington, according to the unnamed seller of the documents.

"The diaries weave a fascinating tapestry of daily life for the Warner sisters at home and abroad," says Julie Mueller, cultural resources planner at the County Parks department. The department

is working to preserve and restore the circa 1894 Warner mansion, with its carriage house and 4.5 acres of parkland at the center of the Kensington Historic District.

The Parks Board wants to use part of the Warner Park grounds as offices for its cultural resources and archeology staff, now working out of rented quarters. Mueller and architects working on the restoration and reuse project say they are actively seeking input from neighbors on site plans for the grounds, presented at a meeting of the Mayor's Warner Circle Advisory Committee September 14.

Mueller added she hopes to travel soon to William and Mary to review the re-discovered papers in person. "Reading excerpts from the diaries is like hoping to find nuggets of gold in the history of Kensington," she says.

Diaries, ocean cruises, jazz and politics--sounds like the ingredients for a future KHS program!

Local Architect Aids in Campaign to Re-open Kensington Cabin

By John Doherty

As a young girl growing up on Kensington Court in the 1980's, Jennifer Gurney enjoyed the trek across Silver Creek with her big brothers to play in the little community park. It seemed bigger then, and she especially remembers the old log cabin tucked into a corner of the playground....had it always been there, she wondered?

Today Jennifer is an architect working in the Hart Senate Office Building for the Architect of the Capitol, but she has not forgotten the old cabin. So when



she attended a slide show about the history of the cabin presented last year by the Kensington Historical Society, she volunteered to help in a campaign to seek historic designation for the shuttered facility.

"It was a way to give something back to the community where I had grown up," she said. Jen had just completed two years service with AmeriCore helping to re-build hurricane-ravaged homes in Biloxi, Mississippi, and was between jobs.

Little did she realize, she said, how deeply involved she would become in the project, which resulted in a detailed nomination application presented to the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission in July.

The Commission gave its unanimous stamp of approval, setting the stage for a hearing on October 14 before the County Parks and Planning Board--and hopefully, final approval by the Montgomery County Council by the end of this year.

Historic listing, Gurney explains, will help secure funding for the restroom

upgrades which would allow the log cabin to re-open after a 20-year hiatus.

By no coincidence, last year was the 75th anniversary of the construction of the cabin, which has been used and enjoyed by generations of Kensington residents for recreation, learning, celebrations and other events.

"We wanted to insure the future of the cabin," explains Julie O'Malley, president of the society, who testified at the hearing and undertook the campaign last year. "And I had my sixteenth birthday party there!" adds Kensington native and KHS board member Toni Ward. . "It will be great to have it open again."

The cabin was built in 1934 by county parks workers, using logs provided by the Maryland Civil Works administration -- a Depression-era program to improve local infra-structure and employ idled workers. It was built in the then-popular "parkitecture" style used in national parks such as Yosemite and Yellowstone. Its long service and durability remain a tribute to the parks and recreation movement and the "can-do" spirit of America during the depths of the Great Depression and the New Deal.



Today, it is the last remaining intact cabin of its type in Montgomery County. "It's very well-preserved,"

said Gurney, whose mother, Yvonne Gurney, is also an architect and helped Jennifer with the massive documentation required for historic certification. "It just needs ADA-approved restrooms."

Gurney worked closely with Claire Kelly and Jamie Kuhns of the Parks Preservation Office and Barbara Scharman of the historical society in developing the nomination documents.

Gurney also credits her Kensington Court neighbors who helped with documentation of the cabin, and hopes a similar effort by the community, perhaps with help from local architecture students, can breathe new life into the venerable cabin by the Silver Creek she remembers as a girl.

To which we can only add amen, and thanks for her community spirit.

Save the Dates:

October 14th: Daytime hearing for the Nomination of Kensington Cabin. See www.montgomeryplanning.org for time

November 3rd: The Town will be holding a Sector Plan Design Guidelines Work-Session at the Town Hall at 7:00 pm. See www.TOK.MD.gov

PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR SPONSORS

We thank them for their support! Their addresses and phone numbers may be found in our 2010 & 2011 calendars - links to many of their websites are on www.kensingtonhistory.org

BENEFACTORS: Macon Construction (Carl Mahaney), Long and Foster Realtors (Gary & Diana Ditto);

PATRONS: Samuel S. Case Cabinetmakers, Kensington Pharmacy, Knowles Printing, Safeway;

SUPPORTERS: State Delegate Al Carr, Amicus, Chesapeake Framing, David Gregg Tree Services, Hardware City, Johnson's, Jubilee Assoc. of MD, Kensington Caboose, Kensington Row Bookshop, Kitchen & Tile Classics, Logan's Automotive, Mizell Lumber & Hardware, Moose, Green & Korom, P.A., Osiris Books, Patrick realty Co, Sparrow's, Sub*Urban Trading Company, Textile & Rug Museum and Susan I. Wranik Associates, One-Stop Tax and Business Service, Washington Securities Corporation, The Hope Chest, Sunflower Consignment Boutique, Catch Can and itsy bitsy Bakery

Help for House Historians

By Helen Wilkes, Julie O'Malley

In response to requests for help in finding more information about one's house, we've put together a list of resources. Included are some resources for researching land records to get information. You can start with a thorough inspection of your home. Observe how your house was built and what types of building materials were used. What style is it? KHS House History forms are available to download from www.kensingtonhistory.org.

Check with the Kensington Historical Society Archives for any information they might have on your home: Town Hall, lower level. Hours: 9 to 12 Fridays or by appointment. info@kensingtonhistory.org (301-942-8933).

The Montgomery County Historical Society has a library/archives available to the public: the Jane C. Sween Library. They also have a Genealogy Club. www.montgomeryhistory.org, Phone: (301) 340-2974, Open: Wed. - Sat., 10-4 p.m.; Saturday, 12-4 p.m.

The University of MD has wonderful information, as well as a downloadable brochure. It provides an excellent summary of how to do this research: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/NTL/Houseguide/index.html>

Montgomery County Land Records Department:

Location: Rockville Judicial Center, Room 212 | Phone: (240) 777-9470 | Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cibtmpl.asp?url=/Content/CircuitCourt/Court/LandRecordsDepartment/LandRecordsDepartment.asp#_Land_Records_Public_Information_Room

The Land Records Department handles all matters relating to real estate transactions. The department holds some of the most important records created by the government, which date as far back as July 1777. These land records are publicly accessible through the Internet, as well as at the department.

Patrons may also obtain access to the images of the instruments related to land records in Montgomery County, as well as other counties in the State of Maryland through MDLandRec.Net, a digital image retrieval system for land records in Maryland.

To access the MDLandRec.Net home page*: <http://www.mdlandrec.net/msa/stagser/s1700/s1741/cfm/index.cfm>.

* When you access the information for the first time, you will be required to fill out an application for login (note: a valid e-mail address is required). You will receive a password via e-mail approximately within 1 hour of completing the application on a normal business day; if you complete the login application on the weekend, you will receive your password the next business day. Accessing information from MDLandRec.Net is currently free.

Once you are logged into the system, you can search land records by name, liber/folio, or tax account number. To search plats, you may use the website: www.plats.net. Use the following user name and password to access the site: User name: plato; Password: plato#

Contact the Maryland State Archives Help Desk at (410) 260-6487 for questions regarding MDLandRec.Net and plats.net.

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cibtmpl.asp?url=/Content/CircuitCourt/Court/LandRecordsDepartment/LandRecordsDepartment.asp#_Land_Records_Public_Information_Room

The U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE offers suggestions for in depth additional research:

Local, regional, and State libraries with collections pertaining to local and regional history, city directories, genealogical collections, photograph collections, and newspapers on microfilm. Inquire about interlibrary loans from distant libraries.

Local and regional branches of the National Archives: census data, Federal survey maps, and guides to collections.

Museums; local, regional, county, and State historical societies and museum associations for valuable publications, files, tours, photograph collections, architectural history collections, local histories, and ephemera.

State Archives and Records Management Offices sometimes contain county assessor's property tax records, as well as other information.

Statewide or nationwide historical and genealogical societies.

Statewide historic preservation organizations.

Universities and colleges: photograph collections, architectural history collections, map and periodical collections, and manuscripts and archives collections. Some universities and colleges have preservation or architecture programs. Frequently, their students will have done surveys of local resources and local history as class projects. They may also be a good source of suggestions about further research possibilities for your specific property.

It should be stressed that much of what is known is still in private ownership. Interviewing past or present property owners, long-time residents, or former staff or employees is often one of the best means of locating information. Very often historical societies, museums, genealogical societies, and pioneer associations can be helpful in locating previous owners or their descendants. Manuscripts, papers, scrapbooks, diaries, and private photograph albums are often the most valuable sources you can investigate.

Terri Rugar of the Washington Post writes "If the search seems daunting... try someone who does the research for a fee." Or "...checking universities for an American studies or historical preservation program... they [students] might not charge as much as a professional."

Kensington Row Bookshop, 3786 Howard Avenue, presents Jack Foley: Thursday, October 14 at 7pm

Jack Foley will read three excerpts from his manuscript *Ambler's Grass: Growing Up in a Suburb of the Cold War*. A history of Kensington in the 1950's

Jack grew up in Kensington on Ambler Drive between September of 1947 and January of 1961. *Ambler's Grass* is a book of closely linked essays exploring, analyzing, but above all dramatizing a certain place in time with claims to being uniquely new in history. It looks at the development of the American suburb after World War II, focusing on Montgomery County, on Kensington, on Ambler Drive. One short piece tells about the ploughing of Ambler and Puller Drives in 1947, a classic example of how the American

suburb grew after World War II. Then he will leap 12 years to describe a mini-Odyssey through the pre-Antiques Heaven of Kensington circa 1959-1960, featuring a meander down Howard Avenue. He will also act out a brief comic scene from the beginning of his father's Kensington political career, which culminated in election to Congress in 1958.

Jack Foley is one of the editors of *FlashPoint: A Journal of the Arts and Politics* (www.flashpointmag.com), where two essays from *Ambler's Grass*, 'Our Friend the Atom: Walt Disney and the Atomic Bomb' and 'An Inpost of Empire' have already appeared.

Donations

The Society welcomes donations of material about all facets of Kensington life. We accept papers, maps, and photos. We can scan standard size items while you wait.

- The Turnabout by George Pelecanos from Emily Robinson.
- Montgomery County by Jane C. Sween, and Montgomery County, Century of Change by Jane Sween & William Offutt from Dan Hayes.
- Photos and memorabilia of Kensington Elementary School, Kensington Jr. High, and Girl Scout Troop 236 from Toni Ward.



Kensington Historical Society Officers and Committee Chairs

OFFICERS:
 President Julie O'Malley
 Vice President Steve Cohen
 Treasurer Detta Voesar
 Recording Secretary Sheila Dunne
 Corresponding Secretary Janet Barnes

AT LARGE MEMBERS
 Sue Mathias
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 Elisenda Sola-Sole

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:
 Gary Ditto, John Doherty,
 Sigrid Doherty, Jack Gaffey,
 Leanne Pfautz, Ann Pfautz,
 Barbara Scharman, Wat Stewart, and Toni Ward

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Isabel and Edward Abrahams
 Miranda Armour-chelli
 Sheila and Scott Dinn
 Donna Messersmith-Jones
 Richard Rice
 Sid Russell
 Doug Smith

KHS WRAPS UP THE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

We are so grateful to the many artists (local and not-so-local) who contributed to another successful season.



KHS brought you 16 free concerts this year! The continuous attendance by members from the entire community is very gratifying. We know you enjoyed the music as well as the opportunity to visit with neighbors. We are happy to be a unique part of the character of Kensington.

Thanks to Diana Dinerman, Julie O'Malley, Betsy Stewart, Barbara Scharman, and Detta Voesar for making this happen. Thanks to the Town for allowing us the use of the Howard Avenue Park.

2011 CALENDARS ARE AVAILABLE

Thanks to our diligent Calendar Committee, Janet Barnes, Sheila Dunn, Julie O'Malley, Katie Rangos, Sharon Roelvink, and Detta Voesar, the new calendars, *Kensington On-the-Go*, were available for the Labor Day Festival! This year the Calendar is a special tribute to Lorraine Kennedy. As always, the calendars are free to members (deliveries are being made) and extra calendars can be purchased for \$5.00. They are available at our general meetings, the Town Hall Office, 3710 Mitchell St., Kensington Row Bookshop, 3786 Howard Ave., Goldsborough Glynn Antiques, 3746 Howard Ave., and the Kensington Pharmacy, 3737 University Blvd. West.

Kensington Historical Society
PO Box 453
Kensington, MD 20895

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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KHS MEETING
Tuesday, October 12, 2010

**CHESTNUT LODGE AND
FRIEDA'S COTTAGE**
Speaker: Mary van Balgooy, Executive
Director of Peerless Rockville

7:00 p.m. Refreshments
7:30 p.m. Presentation

Kensington Town Hall/Armory
Lower Level, 3710 Mitchell Street
at Armory Avenue

A KHS business meeting follows the
presentation.

KENSINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Annual dues January 1 through December 31, 2011

Please send completed form to KHS, PO. Box 453, Kensington, MD 20895

INDIVIDUAL Membership \$ 20
FAMILY Membership \$ 25
Business (Small & Non-Profit) \$ 75
Corporate \$ 100
Lifetime \$ 500

I want to: Join the Kensington Historical Society Renew membership

Enclosed: \$ _____

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Lived in Kensington since _____

Please consider getting involved in one of our committees. Learn more about your Society, ask questions, see how you can become involved by emailing us at info@kensingtonhistory.org.

I am interested in the following committees: (Please circle)

- Programs Membership Newsletter Socials Archives Concerts**
Grants Oral Histories Preservation