

# WEST END NEWS

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Summer 2001

## President's Message

by Brenda Hayward

As we start a new WECA year, there are many challenges ahead. Your new board of directors is diligently working to pinpoint those challenges and chart WECA's course for the coming year. Our overall agenda includes building neighborhood morale and unity, encouraging members to participate in community events, supporting enforcement of building codes, promoting historic preservation and encouraging improvement of properties in the West End of Cambridge. To these ends we are developing a comprehensive program of short-term activities, social events and long range strategies. These will be published as soon as they are finalized.

Elected at the annual membership meeting on April 17, 2001, the new board took office on May 1. As WECA's new president, I have a hard act to follow. Edgar Williams has done an excellent job of keeping the organization on track and if you have been reading your newsletter, you know that under his leadership, WECA has accomplished many things for the benefit of our community over the past year. With Edgar's help and support, and that of all board and committee members, I hope we can continue to move forward with our ambitious agenda. I will be working closely with vice president Herm Kramer, secretary Susan Kunkel, treasurer Andy Madera, and standing committee chairpersons, Doug Kyle (membership/web site), Donna Casarotti (community pride), Carroll Dail (neighborhood data & oversight), Marge Hull (publicity), Ed Stewart (special projects). To this hard-working and dedicated group of volunteers, we have added the following ad-hoc committee chairpersons and co-chairs: Jackie Vickers (historic tours chairperson), Jane Devlin (WOWE chair & community pride co-chair), and Armond Hayward, II (publicity co-chair).

Many members are also actively working with various committees. We have trained about 15 people who are serving as docents with our ambitious program of Historic Tours for the Delta Queen passengers. This project, spearheaded by WECA and the Brannock Maritime Museum, is a major undertaking and has been a real plus for the West End and Cambridge. Several of our members are helping to produce and deliver the Welcome Baskets for new West End property owners. Our recent Spring Yard Sale was an overwhelming success. And, there's more to come!

With a number of exciting new projects coming up, we will need all the help and support we can get. We encourage you to become an active member of WECA, if you're not already. Help recruit new

members. The more members we have, the stronger our voice! WECA Board Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month, at 7:00 p.m. in the Dorchester Public Library meeting room. Attend the next meeting, learn more about WECA, and join in making the wonderful West End of Cambridge an even better place in which to live.

## WECA Historic Tours Give Cambridge a Piece of the Pie

by Marge Hull



*Tour guides in colonial dress greet the passengers of the Delta Queen as they debark. They board buses for a narrated tour of historic Cambridge before heading to St. Michaels. Shown here are docents Marge Hull, Shirley Brannock and Carole Kramer.*

(Continued on page 4)

## Property Transfers

by Carroll Dail

February 15, 2001 through June 12, 2001

ROBERTSON, Charles E., III 416 Glenburn Avenue .....	\$70,000
WRIGHT, Timothy M. 322 West End Avenue .....	\$29,350
BREM, George A. & W. Howardene 1105 Locust Street .....	\$61,000
KIBBE, Martin J. & Donna J. 704 Church Street .....	\$91,500
Chapel Valley Leasing Corp. 314 West End Avenue .....	\$57,500
McGLAUGHLIN, W. Lewis 504 Edlon Park Drive .....	\$60,000
SMITH, Linda Joy 701 Glasgow Street .....	\$50,000
Idlewild Enterprises, LLC 105 Choptank Avenue .....	\$78,000
CURTIS, Carmela Y. 449/451 Willis Street .....	\$56,000
HONEYWELL, Georgia & McWILLIAMS, Danny R. 208 Market Square .....	\$153,000
NEWNAM, Thomas W. & Suzanne E. 820 Locust Street .....	\$54,750
HO, Tony Pham & VO, Den Thi 414 Edlon Park Drive .....	\$75,575

WILKINS, Kimberly I. 414 Willis Street .....	\$69,000
Secretary of Housing & Urban Development 415 Linden Avenue .....	\$68,000
CURTIS, Carmela Y. 812 Locust Street .....	\$75,000
CURTIS, Carmela Y. 301 West End Avenue .....	\$65,000
WILSON, Melvondia 416 Oakley Street .....	\$55,000
SHABAZZ, Early Lacy 706 Travers Street .....	\$63,900
GARCIA-BUNUEL, Martin L. & Elizabeth 600 William Street .....	\$175,900
SPEARS, Tamara Lee 2 Somerset Avenue .....	\$197,400
BOYLE, Frances C. 121 West End Avenue .....	\$75,000
MENDER, Susan A. & COWELL, Dennis M. 117 Choptank Avenue .....	\$97,000
HUGHES, Carl & Terri 435 Oakley Street .....	\$27,000
SPEAR, Lea & Vernon 805 Locust Street .....	\$16,000
HARRIS, Glen E. & POWERS-HARRIS, Anne 412 Edlon Park Drive .....	\$99,000
CARR, Firrel D., Jr. & Frankie B. 308 Belvedere Avenue .....	\$82,000

## WOWE Wows Newcomers

by Jane Devlin

“What a surprise!” has been the most-heard response by committee members upon delivery of WECA’s Welcome Basket. The Welcomers of West End (WOWE) extend a warm welcome to all new property owners who have chosen the West End of Cambridge to be their home. The program has had a great start with 19 baskets having been delivered and attempts at 5 more ongoing.

Through the supportive effort of committee members: Marge Hull, Barbara Williams, Marti Weiler, Donna Harms, and Jean Wright, we have created a steady inventory which will ensure a successful program. Carroll Dail, Neighborhood Data & Oversight Chairman, has supplied the storage/work space and a continual flow of new property owners. Thank you, one and all, for your time and effort.

To all our donors, “Thank you!” This program would not be a success without your support.

## Spring Yard Sale Brings in Sales by the Yard

by Donna Casarotti

The WECA annual Spring Yard Sale was held June 9, 2001. The weather cooperated beautifully with our 20 registered participating residents, and there were many more yard sales that piggy-backed our effort in the West End community.

“This created a true neighborhood environment that I have not seen in years,” said one Willis Street resident, who woke at 6:00 a.m. to her neighbors chatting and scrambling to put the finishing touches to their wares before the first shoppers arrived.

Shoppers came early, armed with their newspaper ad, and were delighted with the total community effort, which in turn delighted our participants. This effort has truly become an event that West Enders and our surrounding community look forward to each year.

## What Local Historic District Designation Means to You

by Armond Hayward, II

You may wonder what living in a historic district means to you. According to an article by Scott D. Whipple, Coordinator, Preservation Assistance and Outreach Programs, for the Maryland Historic Trust:

### Local historic district designation DOES:

- Protect the areas of a community which have special or historic character.
- Provide the only way to protect buildings and neighborhoods from being demolished.
- Improve property value and help keep the visual beauty of a neighborhood.
- Provide property owners of older property with the same type of protection provided to property owners in new subdivisions which have protective covenants.
- Provide property owners with information on how to take care of older buildings and may provide free design assistance.
- Qualify property owners for special local, state and national tax abatement programs for historic property.
- Market old areas to buyers interested in rehabilitating and restoring old buildings.
- Make older property easier to sell for property owners and realtors.
- Provide a local government with a constitutional way to protect the architectural character of the town for all citizens to enjoy.

### Local historic district designation DOES NOT:

- Force property owners to make changes to their buildings.
- Change the permitted use of the property under the zoning code.
- Prohibit new buildings from being constructed.
- Require new buildings to be built in a phony colonial or Victorian style.
- Make property owners open their houses for house tours.
- Raise taxes.
- Make property owners put plaques on their houses.
- Prohibit additions or changes from being made to a property.

For more information, visit the Maryland Historical Trust web page at [www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net](http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net).

## The Downtown Experience

by Marge Hull

At WECA's annual membership meeting in April, Steve Moore, principal of The Moore Group Inc. of Easton, was the keynote speaker. He spoke on "The History of a Town and its Role as a Revitalization Strategy". Steve is a member of the International Downtown Association, The International Council of Shopping Centers, The Main Street Network and the Urban Land Institute. His career spans over 20 years in development, marketing and communications for both large and small business districts. The mission of Moore's consulting firm is to make available to cities and towns the technologies, practices, tools and strategies of successful large commercially managed environments.

His approach to revitalization of main streets is grounded in understanding the history and legacy of the town, and capitalizing on its uniqueness. He sees Maryland's downtowns as enormous untapped potential filled with history and vast appeal. He also sees them as under-performing, fragile and poorly organized. As he spoke, it became obvious that downtown Cambridge typified the many small town communities struggling to make their aging downtown business districts once again a viable economic engine.

Mr. Moore's fascinating slide presentation highlighted the good, the bad and the ugly in shopping malls and downtowns. He explained why certain shopping districts were successful, contrasting a "town center" experience, where people tend to come and spend the day with their families, with the typical outlet mall where shoppers drive in, park, go in a few stores and leave. The outlet is geared to "spot shopping"; there is no history, no culture, no art. Interestingly, studies have shown that the average expenditure per person is twice as much in the "town center" which reflects the unique flavor of the community and is a mix of cultural, educational, visual, and retail shopping experiences.

Moore said that what towns are rich in is becoming the most sought after by consumers, and we need to realize that shopping is changing and how people use their free time is changing.

The typical customer today is:

- a cultural tourist, museum goer, vacationer, concert goer
- looking for time well-spent, an experience of value, a place to "be" not a place to shop
- wants to be a highly prized customer, is looking for a "relationship"

Towns are rich in history, with uniqueness of shops, food and place. They provide a "real" experience, with "real" people, culture, opportunities to learn. Moore stressed that we need to think through what we have and package it. He said we should look at the customer's total experience as our most valuable "product". The experience is the "brand" of the town. The money will follow.

## Commissioners' Corner

### Ward 3 Report by Lee Weldon

The main news relating to West End is the revised ordinance regarding scooters, bikes and skateboards. In a nutshell, the revision will allow children to enjoy their bikes, etc. on the sidewalks only in residential neighborhoods.

Children 14 years and older may not operate bikes etc. on any sidewalks, as they should be responsible enough to ride in the streets.

The downtown business district will be protected with a complete prohibition of cycling, skating and scooting on any sidewalks in the commercial area. Bikes will be allowed in all streets, however. The ordinance also includes a provision for posting of signs in other neighborhoods to prohibit bikes and scooters on a block by block basis, if the residents feel it is necessary.

This new law is much clearer than the existing one, and will be far more practical for our police department to enforce. This ordinance revision was approved at the June 4th City Council Meeting.

Also, neighbors in the Mill, William and Vue de Leau Street area should be aware that sections of curb and gutter will be replaced as part of the overall repaving and sewer separation. While some of this is to repair damage resulting from the sewer work, much of this is considered routine replacement, and the cost WILL be shared 50/50 with the property owner. To see if your property is included, contact the Department of Public Works at 410-228-1955.

You may also take advantage of the opportunity to have your sidewalks replaced if they are in bad shape. By contacting the contractor directly when they are working in your neighborhood, you may be able to achieve a better price.

Also, please note a phone number change. I have discontinued my second line at home, so if you need to contact me, call 410-228-3092, or 410-228-0030 to reach me at the office.

Thanks, and have a great, safe summer.

## WECA Historic Tours

### (con't from page 1)

The Cape May Light, a 224 passenger cruise ship, built along the lines of a turn-of-the-century steamer, made several port calls in Cambridge this spring and has a fall itinerary of 5 more Chesapeake Bay cruises in October-November. Each seven day cruise brings the 300-foot vessel to Sailwinds, where passengers debark for a day on the Eastern Shore. Originally the schedule called for the passengers to be taken from the ship directly to St. Michaels to enjoy a crab feast, the Maritime Museum, and the shopping.

But, thanks to a coordinated effort among the tour organizers, the Brannock Maritime Museum, WECA, and Shirley Kailianu of Tide-

water Motorcoach, LLC, the passengers had the opportunity to see something of Cambridge prior to departing for St. Michaels. A 40-minute narrated tour of historic Cambridge, complete with docents in colonial dress, was provided for 3-5 busloads of passengers each time the ship docked. There are now 15 WECA members trained to give an interesting and informative tour of Cambridge, highlighting our 350 year history. Response to these tours has been very positive, with many favorable comments from the passengers.

It is estimated that the tours will bring 2,200 passengers to the city, not counting the crew of 70 who come into town shopping for ship supplies, services and personal purchases while the passengers enjoy their outing. On the first trip, over \$600 was spent by the crew at local Cambridge businesses.

As a result of the success of the Cambridge historic tours, a dialogue has been opened between Dorchester Tourism and the tour organizers, with the possibility that some of their future tours will make Cambridge and Dorchester County their primary destination. WECA, the Brannock Maritime Museum and Tidewater Motorcoach, went for "a piece of the pie" when no one else would. With 3-5 busloads of passengers on each trip, this has been no small project, with a considerable amount of all-volunteer time spent in planning and executing the tours. Hats off to our 15 docents, and everyone else who has helped make this project a great success!

## WECA Historic Tours Help Put Cambridge on the Map

### by Jackie Vickers

As a result of WECA's extensive activities in developing and conducting bus tours of Historic Cambridge, the Dorchester Tourism Department now plans to include a flyer on the Historic Tours in their group tour packets. WECA has been asked to develop a flyer or brochure describing the tours and providing cost and contact information. Doug Kyle is designing this flyer, with input from Marge Hull and our docents, and it should be available soon.

Recently, a group of tourism officials from the State of Maryland spent the day in Dorchester County, and their itinerary included the 40-minute Historic Cambridge tour, ably conducted by Marge Hull. We believe the state tourism people were very impressed which should help put Cambridge and Dorchester on the tourism map at the state level. Many thanks to Marge for volunteering to take this group around.

**Keep your newsletter coming! Have you renewed your membership for 2001-2002? If not, mail your check for \$6.00 (single member) or \$12.00 (household) to Doug Kyle, Membership Chairman, WECA, P. O. Box 13, Cambridge, MD 21613.**

## Did you Know?

Any conversion of a single-family dwelling to a two-family or multiple family dwelling requires a Special Use Permit, in an R-3 zoned area, which is how most of the West End is zoned. (Some areas west of Oakley are zoned R-1 or R-2. Check with the Department of Planning and Zoning if you are unsure of your property's zoning. R-1 and R-2 allows single family dwellings only.)

All existing multi-family dwellings (except those which can be shown to have been originally constructed as duplexes) have become non-conforming uses in R-3 districts.

Section 20-17 of the Cambridge City Code states "a nonconforming use is a use that legally existed on May 18, 1964, and that does not comply with the regulations for the use district in which it is established....Whenever a nonconforming use has been changed to a more restrictive use, or to a conforming one, such use may not thereafter be changed to a less restricted use....Whenever a nonconforming use of a building or portion thereof is discontinued for a continuous period of one year, any future use of such building or portion thereof shall be in conformity with the regulations of the district in which such building is located."

This means that if a pre-existing two-family or a multi-family dwelling has not been rented for a period of one year, a Special Use Permit would be required to convert it back into apartments.

Special Use Permits require a public hearing and approval of the Zoning Appeals Board. The Zoning Appeals Board is a legal entity. Appeal is to the Circuit Court.

The Cambridge Comprehensive Plan has identified an over-abundance of multi-family housing in the city and has recommended against proliferation of this housing type. For this reason, the Zoning Board of Appeals has recently denied some applications for Special Use Permits for conversions within the R-3 zoned area of Cambridge.

For more information on zoning, contact Tina Walter, Planning and Zoning Coordinator, at 410-228-6466.

## Historic Tax Credits Become More Accessible

by Armond Hayward, II

An improved, simplified, and more accessible historic preservation tax credit program went into effect on July 1, 2001. Changes to the Maryland Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program include:

- Refundable tax credits – property owners will be able to receive the full benefit of the 25 percent tax credit in the same year. If the tax credit exceeds the amount of income tax owed, they will receive a refund for the balance. Previously, the credit was applied against income taxes for successive years until used up.
- Eligibility for non-profit organizations – the tax credit is now available to 501(c)3 organizations rehabilitating historic properties.
- Elimination of retroactive approvals – in order to receive a tax credit, property owners must first receive approval from the Maryland Historical Trust for the proposed work. No projects will be approved retroactively for tax credits after the rehabilitation is done. Before and after documentation is required.
- Recapture clause – Maryland now has a recapture clause that parallels the federal tax credit program.
- Separation of federal and state tax credits – on commercial rehab projects, the federal tax credit and the Maryland tax credit may be separated. This should make projects in Maryland more attractive to out of state developers.

For more information on the Maryland Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program, contact Programs Director, Elise A. Butler, Preservation Maryland: telephone 410-685-2886; fax 410-539-2182; e-mail [PM@PreserveMD.org](mailto:PM@PreserveMD.org).

Source: *The Phoenix* (The Newsletter of Preservation Maryland), Summer 2001.

### Heritage Resource Group, Inc.

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## **Dorchester-Cambridge Promise Helps Enrich Summer for Cambridge Youth**

The **Dorchester-Cambridge Promise** organization, in collaboration with the Dorchester County Office of Child and Family Services, is planning bus trips this summer for underserved youth from Dorchester County. The outings are intended to offer cultural enrichment and educational opportunities over the summer months and are dependent upon the Promise organization's ability to raise funds to pay for bus transportation to various locations within Maryland. The approximate transportation cost of each outing is \$350.

The **Dorchester-Cambridge Promise** is an affiliation of the national youth organization known as *America's Promise*, which was founded by now Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and an array of civic and business leaders in 1997.

The Promise organization is requesting donations, in any amount, to help treat these children to an outing they might otherwise be unable to attend. Donations should be made to: **Cambridge-Dorchester Promise** and mailed to the Dorchester County Office of Child and Family Services at 403 Race Street, Cambridge, MD 21613. If you have any questions, call Mr. David Elzey, Program Specialist, at 410-228-0281.

WECA urges our members to give whatever they can to support this worthwhile community-wide youth program. As an organization, WECA has offered to provide a tour of Historic Cambridge for a group of these children at no charge. Learning more about the 350 year history of Cambridge would be a meaningful cultural and educational experience that can be had right here at home.