

West River Improvement Association

The Village Voice

September 2011

President's Column

Wow - wasn't August exciting?

Earthquake, hurricane, a week of steady rain, no power, my home phone is out, and did we have a plague of locusts? Maybe it just seems so. I hope that all of us, and those close to us, got through nature's challenges with minimal hardship, and that everyone's power was restored with only minor loss of the conveniences of running water, flushing toilets, working stoves and ovens, refrigerated food, media, and entertainment devices. I'll remember to fill my bathtub next time we have heavy storm warnings, and I'll find or renew all those candles my mom and grand-mom had secreted around the house. And matches, too - since few of us smoke nowadays, I need to consciously buy matches, or start going back to bars and night-clubs to pick up some..... Remember also that schools are open again, so watch out for kids on the sidewalks and roads as you are rowing to and from work in this crummy weather.

Elsewhere in this publication you'll find the slate of proposed Officers and Board members for the upcoming year beginning January 2012. We've had dedicated, imaginative and hard work from our current officers and board, and next year's volunteers - some new, some re-committing, will have as hard, or harder, work to accomplish, and BIG shoes to fill. They may call on any of us to give assistance - I hope that if you or I are asked we will do what we can to further the goals of the community and of WRIA.

The Fall Square Dance schedule is set for dances at the Hall: Saturdays - September 24th, October 29th, and November 26th - pot luck food at

5:45; dancing begins at 7:00 PM. I hope that you can come join us! If you haven't had an opportunity to attend one, you really should - they are a hoot - no pun intended.

The Galesville Community Center Organization will officially re-open the former Galesville School (Rosenwald School) the end of September. This marks many years of hard work by that organization, by the Galesville Heritage Society, by WRIA, and the Galesville community at large. Come visit the School during one of its open houses or community events. The renovation is truly outstanding!

WRIA has temporarily taken the lead to assure the preservation of the historic Wilson Farmhouse adjacent to the Hot Sox Baseball Field. This past Spring, WRIA utilized grant funds to temporarily stabilize the house to limit further deterioration and also made application for additional grant funds to initiate the building renovation process. While the County continues its effort to acquire the property from the Wilson heirs, an ad hoc committee with representation by the WRIA, Galesville Heritage Society, Inc. and the Galesville Community Center Organization, Inc. has been formed. It is intended this committee, with the working name - Friends Of The Wilson Property, will provide the County with community input regarding the future use and redevelopment of the property.

Our village is diminished by the recent loss of two members of the Dixon family. Dean's sudden loss shocked us all. How often have all of us gone crabbing, or fishing, or just plain boating on an afternoon? Dee,

Bobby, and their kids - Bruce, Dean, and Cliff, and their children - have helped make Galesville what it is today. We mourn their, and our, loss.

Also - Miss Agnes: 107 years old, she died at home on August 23rd here in Galesville. She was a college graduate during a time when not so many women were. She touched the lives of many Anne Arundel County kids during her four-year career as a County elementary school teacher. She touched the lives of a whole different group of us when she was the Galesville Post Mistress for about 27 years. She survived the deaths of her husband, one of her sons, one of her sons-in-law, her sister, and six of her brothers. Her brother, Kenneth Smith, 96, of Cumberstone and his family survive her, as do four daughters and her son, and a bunch of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A full, rich life, involved with much of Galesville's recent history, is over, and it is a sad loss to all of us.

With regards to all,

John Cox
President

Save This Date

October 3

Please join us for the WRIA Annual Meeting & Election of Officers - 7:30 p.m. Galesville Memorial Hall

Jack Smith will speak on preserving the Wilson property on Galesville Road

Wilson Farmhouse



The West River Improvement Association, Inc. (WRIA) has worked closely with the Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division to prepare a grant application to obtain capital funding to conduct emergency stabilization on the vacant Wilson Farmhouse, a circa 1870s dwelling that was built by manumitted slave Henry Wilson on the Galesville Road. The house and surrounding 26.5 acre property is highly significant to African American history in the State of Maryland for its tangible link to slavery, manumission, tenant farming, and for the semi-professional Negro League baseball field that survives adjacent to the house. Although the building has long been neglected and is in

poor condition, the site has been determined eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

Anne Arundel County is currently in the process of acquiring the property from the Wilson heirs through funding made available through the State's Program Open Space. In consideration, however, of the existing compromised condition of the house, an ad hoc committee with representation by the WRIA, Galesville Heritage Society, Inc. and the Galesville Community Center Organization, Inc. has been formed. It is intended this committee, with the working name - Friends Of The Wilson Property, will provide the County with community input regarding the redevelopment and future use of the property. The WRIA has proactively participated in this private-public partnership to ensure this highly significant house is stabilized so that future plans for rehabilitation can be undertaken.

Earlier this year, William Brown, owner of Subterranean Construction, Inc., generously provided his time and expertise to temporarily cover the roof and secure the building. If the grant application is approved, funds will be available to enable the WRIA, in close coordination with Anne Arundel County, to repair and replace the roof system, install new shingles, repair the siding to return it to its original state, and to stabilize the foundation, sills and beams. A more extensive stabilization will still be required as part of the overall redevelopment effort to ensure this significant piece of our Galesville African American heritage is preserved for future generations.

Jack Smith will speak on the importance of preserving the Wilson Property & Hot Sox ball fields at the WRIA annual member meeting at 7:30 p.m. on October 3, at the Galesville Hall.

Bill Gibbons

Galesville Rosenwald School



Grand Reopening Celebration

Friday, September 30, 2011, 11. a.m.

Ribbon Cutting and Community Center Open House hosted by the Galesville Community Center Organization, Inc.

A Village Great

Mourning the sudden loss of Dean Dixon.

To see how our village rallied around the Dixon family and how we observed another 'village boy' come and do everything he could to help find Dean for his family. Thank you Joe Tucker for reminding us we never leave our village and the families in it! That's what we're about.....we may not live in the village but we never leave it!

Edna-Wynne

Agnes Smith Dixon

June 5, 1904—August 23, 2011



Agnes Smith Dixon, 107, a life-long resident of Galesville, died August 23, 2011, at home. She was one of nine children of Mary and Joseph Smith. She was preceded in death by her husband, Sewell Dixon, her son, Sewell Dixon, Jr., her son-in-law, Thomas Perry, one sister and six brothers. Her sole surviving sibling is Kenneth Smith, 96, who lives in Cumberstone.

“Miss Agnes” and “Cap’n. Sewell” had six children, eighteen grandchildren and many, many great and great-great grandchildren. Until her death, there were two sets of five living-generations in her family.

She attended Western Maryland College, graduated from Towson Normal School, and taught school in Anne Arundel County. As her daughter, Betty, said, “She did not care for teaching, although she was about the best teacher that could ever be—but not in the classroom.” She taught by example, rather—about loving your neighbor and loving God. She was a lifelong member of Galesville United Methodist Church, and “always gave her 10th” to the church.

During her 107 years she saw many changes in life here; she remembered the Emma Giles steamboat era, the first cars coming to Galesville, electricity arriving in 1929 and oxen haul-

ing tobacco down to the pier. She was the Galesville postmaster from 1947 until 1974, having succeeded her mother in that position.

Her granddaughter, Carol Sue wrote, “Granny exemplified unconditional love. It was not just a phrase used here and there, but a way of life for her. She taught us the difference between things and people, a huge lesson and not one easy to teach.....I am not sad about Granny dying, because I’m so happy and excited for her to be in heaven. By the way, I think we know the exact time she settled into heaven because I think Jesus told her to pull up a chair right next to Him and the ground shook.”

Sue Hines

Proposed 2012 WRIA Slate

President: John Cox
Vice President: Michael Berson
Secretary: Linda Lawrence
Treasurer: Lynne Mac Adam
Newsletter: Jody Stuart

Board Members:

Ellen Berson	Laura Dixon
Peter Baer	Bill Gibbons
Joan Bell	Sue Hines
Holly Clark	Jody Stuart
Cynthia Czubat	Elsie Whitman
Jim Day	

WRIA Board 2011

President: John Cox
Secretary: Edna Wynn Raley
Treasurer: Lynne Mac Adam
Newsletter: Jody Stuart
Hall Rental: Lynne MacAdam 410-867-1121
Hall Management: Holly Clark 410-867-3508

Board Members:

Pete Baer	Luara Dixon
Joan Bell	Bill Gibbons
Ellen Berson	Sue Hines
Holly Clark	Jody Stuart
Cynthia Czubat	Bruce Weidele
Jim Day	Elsie Whitman

Calendar of Events

September 24

Square Dance—pot luck food at 5:45; dancing at 7:00 p.m.

September 30

Rosenwald School Ribbon-Cutting

October 3

Please join us for the WRIA Annual Meeting & Election of Officers - 7:30 p.m.
Galesville Memorial Hall

Jack Smith will speak on preserving the Wilson property on Galesville Road

October 29

Square Dance—pot luck food at 5:45; dancing at 7:00 p.m.

October 30

River Gallery Open—
with candy

November 5

Auction for West/Rhode Riverkeeper

November 11

Veterans Day Observance

November 12

Galesville United Methodist Church Chicken and Oyster Dinner - Galesville Memorial Hall - 7 P. M.

November 13

6:30—GHS
Quarterly Dinner

November 26

Square Dance—pot luck food at 5:45; dancing at 7:00 p.m.
(Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend)

December 9th

Holiday Social

Dec 20th

Holiday Decorating Contest
Judging

Yoga

Saturday mornings and
Wednesday evenings - yoga
at the Galesville Memorial Hall. Contact renyoga@earthlink.net for more info.

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Address Service Requested