



# The Slate

Spring 2017 Edition

Friends of the One-Room Schoolhouse, Inc.

P. O. Box 431, Port Republic, MD 20676-0431 • [www.calvertoneroomschool.org](http://www.calvertoneroomschool.org)



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# 2016 Ice Cream Social Was August 3

All of the ingredients for a perfect evening gathering were in place – beautiful summer weather, delicious ice cream, yummy homemade cookies, incredible live music, and family and friends to enjoy it all with. On Wednesday, August 3, last year, the Friends of the One-Room Schoolhouse Board and the Calvert Retired School Personnel hosted the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Ice Cream Social at the Schoolhouse.

The Calvert Dance Band once again provided the music for the evening, and how could one not get up and

dance when they played “In The Mood”? They have been most generous with their time and talent over the years, in fact, playing at the Ice Cream Social for almost all of the 15 years it has been hosted.

This was the third year that guests were treated to the delicious local ice cream made with organic milk from Mrs. Moo, at Spider Hall. Members of the Schoolhouse Board and the Retired School Personnel shared their baking talents with a wide variety of tasty cookies.

Guests enjoyed tours of the Schoolhouse with the little ones trying on the clothing of children in the 1920s. And those slates just begged to be written on with the slate pencil.

## 2017 Ice Cream Social Set for July 19

If you missed this fun event last year, be sure to mark your calendar for July 19, 2017, and make it a family and friends’ gathering.



## Four Generations of the Williams Family at 2016 Christmas Open House

*Left to right front row: Averi Lewis, Kendyll Lewis, Caileigh Foveaux, Molly McCready, Dotty Williams Greene, Cindy Greene Horsmon*

*Left to right back row: Donnie McCready, Will McCready, Nancy Williams Zinn*

### The Williams Family Connections...

All are family members or descendants of Alverta Miller Williams, author of “Historical Perspective” on page 5.

Averi, Kendyll, and Caileigh are Donnie’s grandchildren. Donnie is a son of Virginia Williams McCready. Will is a nephew of Donnie. Molly is Will’s daughter.



# Always Improving...

by Fran Armstrong



Each Fall and Spring, Christ Church-grounds are astir with the sounds of 4<sup>th</sup> graders as they maneuver around the premises on their Port Republic One-Room Schoolhouse (ORS) field trip. While one class is learning lessons in the schoolhouse, the other class experiences a one-mile hike through the church property grounds. There is always something to see and do during this meaningful experience.

## Feedback from Evaluation Forms Drives Improvements

Each year our little One-Room Schoolhouse hosts about 1,250 students. Using feedback from our evaluation forms in the past, we added an extra trail guide each day to allow for smaller groups of children to experience the nature walk.

We also purchased McGuffey reading books to create a more authentic classroom lesson.

## Preparing for Future Groups of 4<sup>th</sup> Graders

Our goal is to make this field trip the most meaningful experience it can be, and to that end, our ORS Committee members and other volunteers met over the summer to evaluate the program again.

We coordinated our efforts with Cecelia Lewis, Social Studies Supervisor, to be sure our DVD "The One-Room Schoolhouse Still Teaches" is in every school to be shown as a pre-visit activity, we also made pre-visit packets for each school. These packets include a list of 10 'Considerations' to help prepare the students for their visit. These packets also include name tags for every child. Also, we added

folding chairs in the schoolhouse so that parent volunteers can be more involved in the lessons.

Because our schedule is so full, we are also finding ways to incorporate a new 'position' into our program—an adult to assist the teacher by distributing materials, and helping out at lunchtime or during bathroom breaks so that we can maximize the time spent on school activities. And, was it mentioned that many of our docents dress in period costumes as well?

Last fall, we had our new ideas in place and found them to be quite helpful.

We have built a program we are all very proud of, and we got great feedback from the teachers as well. That says it all.

# 2016 Celebration Luncheon

by Fran Armstrong

On May 18, 2016, the One-Room School Committee of the Calvert Retired School Personnel Association and the Friends of the One-Room Schoolhouse held its annual Celebration Luncheon in the Parish Hall of Christ Church. The fellowship hall was transformed into flower arrangements and lace, with two display tables featuring artifacts from past women educators: Alverta Williams (*Dotty Greene and Nancy Zinn's mother*), and Ruth Burson (*Carol Khalili's grandmother*).

This luncheon is a much anticipated culmination of a full year of volunteerism where many people have willingly shared their time and talents to bring the One Room School experience back to life!

Jack Fringer, President of the Friends' Board of Directors, presided over the luncheon and began with the introduction of special guests,

followed by the invocation by Reverend Mariann Babinis, interim rector at Christ Church. Our delicious meal was prepared by Loujeania Johnson.

Our program highlights included the initiation of Richard Dodds into our Honor Roll ranks, and a reading, written by Alverta Williams, explaining the start of the cafeteria program we have today. We also recognized our newest recruits; Sherry Burcham, Nancy Highsmith, Connie Hollowell and Cindy van Dijk.

Thanks to our many Volunteers! Our Teachers were Casey Duehrssen, Chloe Ewalt, Jody Longhill, and Carole Wagner. Our Farm Life piece was taught by Fran Armstrong, Bruce Armstrong, Sherry Burcham, Jack Fringer, Faye Graff, and Pamela Mackall. Barbara Fringer (*Trail Guide Coordinator*), and Trail Guides



Carol Khalili reading "Early Hot Lunch Program."  
See article on facing page.

this session were: Fran Armstrong, Bruce Armstrong, Trish David, Kathy Ellwood, Jack Fringer, Susan Hammond, Nancy Highsmith, Connie Hollowell, Pamela Mackall, Ruth Mora, Ginny Murphy, Bob Platt, and Cindy van Dijk.

This year instead of handing out certificates to each of our volunteers we decided to support an Eagle Scout project in their names. James Coffren will rebuild two 16' bridges along our trail.

The success of our program rests squarely on the shoulders of all our volunteers. We are truly blessed to have such a dedicated group. Thank you one and all!

## Honor Roll of Volunteers

At the annual Celebration Luncheon recognition is given to the volunteers who donate time, enthusiasm, and energy to the activities that the visiting students enjoy, remember, and retell for years to come. Our gratitude goes to each contributor. The One-Room Schoolhouse visitation by 4<sup>th</sup> graders would fall short of being exceptional without them.

Over time a core group of stalwart and dedicated individuals reached out to carry a significant share of the load with ongoing support. Many individuals have retired from active service to the Friends Board or the One-Room Schoolhouse committee and there are those who have passed away.

Wanting to keep their memory alive, the Friends of the One-Room Schoolhouse

(FORS) began an Honor Roll in 2014. A vignette of each honoree's special gifts to the schoolhouse and program was read aloud. Evident in each individual were generosity and skills. These ranged from preserving historic aspects and needs, providing physical care and repair of the schoolhouse, developing the educational program, being present and responsible for children in the day-to-day operations of the field trip day, constructing and maintaining the trail walk, and liaising with the Calvert County Public Schools and Christ Church. Leadership and stewardship contributions featured prominently in each of these individuals.

The plaque to honor and remember these special individuals hangs inside the schoolhouse.



# “Early Hot Lunch Program in Calvert County” by Alverta Miller Williams

*This account was included in “Our Legacy,” stories written by teachers for our 1976 Bicentennial celebration.*

Alverta Miller Williams (1904-1991) is the mother of Virginia McCready, Dotty Greene, Bobby Williams, Mary Linda Wegner, and Nancy Zinn—all of whom are still active in the Christ Church community today. Dotty and Nancy also serve on committees with the One-Room Schoolhouse. See multigenerational photo on page 2.

A new tradition was started in 2015 at our annual Celebration Luncheon. It is called “Historical Perspective” and it was designed to keep us ‘grounded’ in the past, and allows for our newer members to fully understand our Port Republic School #7 stories as told in the first person.

My first experiences in the schools of Calvert County, MD, were not as a public schoolteacher but as a Home Demonstration Agent, employed by the Extension Service of the University of Maryland and the United States Department of Agriculture. I came in the fall of 1930 as the first full-time agent for a number of years, after having taught for three years in one-room schools in Garrett County and one year as a teacher of home economics. Miss Edythe Turner, our District Agent, had worked in the county a week out of each month over a period of a year or two and had paved the way for me by starting several Women’s and 4-H Clubs.

Since home economics was not yet being taught in the high schools, the school authorities seemed eager to cooperate with the Extension Service in allowing us to organize 4-H Clubs in the schools. I recall at one school having the girls excused to meet at the home of two of the members just across the road from the school.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the first year was a Nutrition program, reaching into nine one-room schools and involving cooperation between the schools and the Health Department, the Red Cross, and the P.T.A.s. The year before, Miss Turner had started, in one or two schools, a hot lunch program to supplement the lunch students brought from home. Several schools were serving canned soups.

While there was a felt need for more of this work to be done, the lack of money to buy the necessary food and equipment seemed an almost insurmountable obstacle.

It was at this point that the Evaporated Milk Association helped to solve both problems. The first by offering to furnish one-half of the Evaporated Milk used, provided the schools would serve a hot dish, using any brand of milk at least three times a week for a period of five months; and the second by offering \$250 in prizes to be used by the competing schools in the county to further the school lunch program for the following year.

Calvert County was essentially rural, tobacco being the chief crop, and there was little dairying. While some families had one or more cows, many families did not have an adequate supply of milk. There were no milk trucks carrying milk to the stores either. This was one of the reasons Calvert County was selected as one of the four in the United States for this pilot program.

A local committee, representing the School Board, Health Department, Red Cross and Extension groups was formed to foster the work in the county. The Red Cross appropriated \$150 to assist the schools that wished to take up the project. To increase the amount of milk used, the Evaporated Milk Association later offered to pay for all the milk that



Alverta Miller Williams circa 1932

the children would drink, unsweetened and unflavored. Many of the children overcame an actual dislike for the canned milk and learned to drink it.

A check of the food habits at the beginning of the project showed a decided lack of fruit and vegetables as well as milk. One P.T.A. furnished a salad one day a week, and several schools planted gardens and canned some of the vegetables for the Hot Lunch Program work the following year.

As to equipment, the flat top of some of the wood stoves or borrowed coal oil stoves were used. Each child brought his or her cup and spoon from home, and in most cases carried them home to be washed. In general, the preparation was made by committees that started work before school in the morning or at the morning recess so as to break into the school program as little as possible.

In June, prizes were awarded. They ranged from \$43 for first prize to \$20 each for seventh, eighth and ninth prizes. This money was put into equipment for the following year. Soon after this, most of the one-room schools were consolidated and the equipment became the nucleus for the starting of cafeterias in those schools. What a contrast to the lunch programs in our schools today, which have really become ‘big business.’ But, remember, this took place in 1931 in the midst of the “Great Depression” when dollars were scarcer than they are today and a teacher could save enough from her salary in one year to pay cash for a brand new Ford!!!

# First Aid for Schoolhouse Flooring

Thousands of pairs of feet come through the One-Room Schoolhouse each year and they are taking their toll.

FORS Board member, Jeff Klapper, took the leadership on the project of providing first aide to the beautiful oak floors. In the spirit of “we can do this ourselves and save money” the Friends’ Board chose to clean and stain the flooring .

Joining Jeff were Jack Fringer, Mary Ellen Romney, Nancy Zinn, Peter Cochran, Carol Khalili, and Barbara Fringer. It may be that they chose the hottest day in July, but came early and worked until noon in a spirit of fun and camaraderie.

They first removed student desks from the schoolhouse. Then the crew set to work with the necessary tasks of vacuuming, light sanding, staining and buffing. Desk leg runners were removed, they appeared to be contributing to the wear on the floors, grinding in sand and dirt carried in by the many visitors.



Nancy Zinn and Jeff Klapper “administering first aid.”

Velcro tape was cut to the shape of the leg bottoms, then the soft loop side was applied. We hope this new treatment will allow the desks to slide without damaging the floors. The schoolhouse was ready for the many visitors attending the Christ Church Tournament and the school visits in the fall session of 2016.



## Holiday Open House Was Dec. 18

Once again voices, laughter, and music echoed from the schoolhouse on Sunday, December 20, as children and adults gathered to enjoy an old-fashioned Christmas. Everyone was treated to hot cider, hot chocolate, and homemade cookies.



Children strung popcorn and cranberries to either hang on the Christmas tree in the schoolhouse or to take home and hang on their tree. They also enjoyed helping to decorate the tree in the schoolhouse with old-fashioned ornaments. It was indeed a magical time, and if you missed this fun glimpse back in time, be sure to mark your calendar for next year’s gathering on the Sunday before Christmas.





*Fallen trees need to be removed.  
Trail maintenance is ongoing year-round.*

For at least a dozen years, perhaps longer, I have been walking the 7 Bridges Trail as a guide for the One-Room Schoolhouse program. Sometime after I retired from Calvert County Public Schools as a high school English teacher, I connected with Joan Gott, Sandy Roberts, and Joan's husband Walter. Mary Ellen Romney took me on the walk to familiarize me with the trail and the historic highlights along the way. All around the edge was Elaine Dunkle's influence.

Early in the fourth grade program, a trail guide led a full class of students along the mile and a quarter trail and then, did the same walk with the second class. There have always been two classes visiting each day. At the outset of the program, there was one trail guide per day. There were a handful of guides at the time: Bob Platt, Jane Head, and others, but never two on the same day.

Over the years, the role of the trail guide has been modified to some degree. Now in 2017,

# Making a Choice

*by Barbara Fringer*

*"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—"  
I took the 7 Bridges Trail at Port Republic School #7  
"And that has made all the difference."*

*"Quotes" are from Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken."  
Middle line supplied by volunteer Barbara Fringer, pictured below.*

there are 20+ guides on the list. Bob Platt remains one of them. And there are always two guides each day, sometimes three in order to "share" a walk. Each class is divided in half so that one half walks from the schoolhouse end while the other half walks from the tournament end, passing on the railroad bed. And then, there is the second walk.

**Highlights on the Trail**  
Students see photos and hear the story of hogsheads, large barrels of tobacco, being rolled down the Rolling Road to Governor's Run Wharf. A song may

be sung as the students skip through the Paw Paw Patch. An elevated railroad bed credits the efforts of the Barreda Brothers to establish a railroad line from Drum Point to Baltimore. Students become familiar with the Jousting Tournament field which has hosted competitors for 150+ years and learn that jousting is the official Maryland state sport.

Eagle Scout projects have been instrumental in development and maintenance of the trail. In response, the Girl Scouts placed wooden crosses to signify a location for reflection –

the good fortune of the fourth grade curriculum connection! The 7 Bridges Trail is the part of the daily visit which reminds today's Uber travelers that "once upon a time," walking three miles to school was the happiest part of every youngster's day.

This trail walk remains for me the most satisfying aspect of being a volunteer in Calvert County. There is, in my opinion, no more captivating opportunity than to spend 2 or 3 hours with curious young people who find our trail to be "awesome."



## Friends of the One-Room

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Jeff Klapper Mary Ellen Romney

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*Newsletter layout and design by  
Frances Dunkle Poling*

## President's Corner

*by Jack Fringer, President*

As we prepare the 2016/2017 Edition of the Slate for publication, the Spring session is in full swing. The schoolhouse is once again experiencing the sounds of fourth graders enjoying a "Day in History."

### Work on the Schoolhouse and Trail Is Ongoing Year Round

Although, the fourth graders only visit in the Fall and Spring, the activities at the Port Republic School #7 continue throughout the year. From our annual Celebration

Luncheon to our Christmas Open House, our volunteers keep busy maintaining the schoolhouse, the trail, and recruiting new volunteers.

### Volunteers Are Always Needed and Appreciated!

Speaking of volunteers, our program is always in need of volunteers to assist with classroom instruction, to share their experiences of growing up on a farm, to guide the students on their "walk to or from school," or to lend a hand in maintaining

the schoolhouse and trail. There is always a job for everyone.



I encourage you to be in touch with one of our Board members and offer to share your time and experiences to support our program.

Thanks for your support of Port Republic School #7.

## Port Republic School #7 Is on the Web

Website: [www.calvertoneroomschool.org](http://www.calvertoneroomschool.org) • Email: [admin@calvertoneroomschool.org](mailto:admin@calvertoneroomschool.org)