



NEWSLETTER

Winter, 2002

FROM THE PODIUM:

As I am quick to remind close friends, as Calvert County continues to experience rapid growth, we must all work to maintain or grow a sense of community. This community not only serves us in the *now*, it also links us to the past and helps us understand how we got to this place in time. Calvert County was once a rural Maryland county connected to the water and the land for its economic lifeblood. While modern technology and development have changed the county, it is not a mandate that we surrender our "community" in the process.

The educational program that is evolving under the guidance of Joan Gott and key members of the Retired Teachers Association is an effort to connect to what once was, so that today's visitor can better understand who we are. It is not by accident that Walter Gott, Joan's husband and a major source of the labor for the program, has constructed a trail for students to "walk to school". During this trek through the woods, students can better understand the Calvert County of 80 years ago when there was but a single two-lane road down the middle of the county, many of the side roads were not by today's standards and most families limited their travel within their community be it Port Republic, Island Creek or Lower Marlboro.

This summer we hosted our first and not our last, Ice Cream Social. While I've never turned down an evening of music and dessert, the intent of the evening was to address the issue of community. We all go through our daily lives, wrapped in the stress of the job and family and often forget to check on our neighbor or help out with a church or community event. While most of our readership lives in Calvert County, wherever you may be reading this, ask yourself; "Do I know of and understand five significant events of the past 50 years in my community?" "Why is it that I have chosen this area as my home?"

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The past year has certainly been an exciting one for the Friends of the One Room Schoolhouse on several fronts. While we continue to witness an increased demand on the facility, we also have learned that we are not immune from the current events that shape the region. This message was brought home and directly impacted our programs when Washington DC struggled with the sniper incidents during the early Fall. With the cancellation of all field trips by the regional school systems, our educational program took a direct hit. Where we had anticipated in excess of 3,000 children experiencing first-hand life in a one room schoolhouse, the entire year was limited to no more than 400 students. Undaunted, we will pick back up in the Spring and get the program back on track.

This year we tried a community event in July which was such a success that several folks requested that we make it a monthly event during the summer months. On July 25th, with the help of the Calvert Community Band, we hosted an Ice Cream Social on the grounds of the schoolhouse. With the support of Christ Church, we were able to provide "cover" from the elements for the band under the porch of the Parish Hall, while the visitors lounged in the yard on lawn chairs and sampled ice cream and cookies. I'm not sure that we have the energy to make this a monthly event, but we will certainly do everything within our power to be back next summer for another evening of ice cream and music. Stay tuned.

In February, with a lot of help from the Calvert County Office of Tourism, we were able to unveil a new informational sign that will allow visitors to understand the schoolhouse on days when the building is not open. Long in planning, there were several edits of the text prior to final approval by all parties involved in the production of the sign. Our thanks to Herman Schieke and his staff for the wonderful support for our program.

INTERPRETATIVE SIGN IN PLACE



Herman Schieke, Director of the Calvert County Office of Tourism and Elaine Dunkle of the Calvert Retired Teachers Association display the new Information sign posted at the entrance to the grounds of the One room schoolhouse.

On February 22nd, the Calvert County Office of Tourism and the Retired Teachers Association unveiled the new interpretative sign that greets visitors to the schoolhouse upon arrival in the parking lot. With funding provided by a grant from the National Park Service, the sign is designed to help the visitor understand the historic nature of the schoolhouse in the event that the building is not open during their visit. In addition, it will serve as an interpretative tool for those who might be unable to climb the stairs to gain entrance to the building.

After gaining approval for funding, the final text of the sign was a result of many edits involving the Retired Teachers Association, staff at the Jefferson Patterson Park as well as the Office of Tourism as they re-worked the text and decided on the final photographs from the collection that would be included on this limited, yet informative space. **Our thanks to all for a job well done.**

Educational Program update

After a successful spring session, Joan Gott and her crew of volunteers were anticipating an increase in visitations to the property as the Calvert County Board of Education had adopted our "Day in a one room schoolhouse" as part of their elementary social studies curriculum. No one could have predicted what would happen to the greater Washington Area with the onset of the actions of an unknown sniper. The unfolding news had a direct impact on our program as the schools throughout the area cancelled field trips and kept students inside during the crisis.

We will pick up where we left off during the Spring of 2003, but it certainly reminds us how connected we are to the world around us.

We would like to thank all of the volunteers that

made this program such a success. We are beginning to build a network of interested students and adults from the Calvert County High Schools, The College of Southern Maryland, members of the the Calvert Retired Teachers Association and the American Chestnut Landtrust. Thanks again for your efforts and we look forward to April when we can hike the trails, carry water and learn about games before there was television.



Contribution of Storage Facilities

After the spring sessions of the educational program, it became apparent to all involved that we needed to acquire some storage space on site to accommodate the wide range of supplies required to successfully conduct our "Day in a one room schoolhouse" program. The Board had placed the acquisition of a storage building in our five year plan but had not set it as a goal until after the roof had been repaired. Through the efforts of one of our Board members, an anonymous donor was located who made possible the delivery of the building in the fall. Finished in the colors of the schoolhouse, it almost blends with the neighboring forest. Thanks to whom ever you are – your timely gift has been greatly appreciated.



Summer 2002 Ice Cream Social



Waters Ross, Board member entertains his wife Mamie and Betty Weems with the help of John Briscoe (obscured)



The Calvert Community Band plays to the delight of the crowd

Together we can preserve Port Republic's educational past for future generations.

I WANT TO HELP THE FRIENDS

MEMBERSHIP includes a newsletter plus information on activities with updates on coming events.

Individual or Family – \$20.00 Benefactor – \$50.00 Sustaining – \$100.00

Additional Contribution _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Make checks payable to *Friends of the One Room Schoolhouse, Inc.*

Mail to: Friends of the One Room Schoolhouse, Inc.
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