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## Historic Belmont at Risk

By Cathy Hudson

Maryland landowners of large properties are faced with critical decisions. Often they must determine now what the fate of their property will be in the future. Property owners have to balance selling the property for development or preserving the property by placing it in permanent easement. Conservation and historic easements preserve property forever.

The pressures facing large, historic properties nationwide are evident at Historic Belmont, a 68-acre parcel of bordered by the Patapsco State Park, and surrounded by the rapidly urbanizing Baltimore-Washington corridor of eastern Howard County.

Belmont is one of the first and most significant historic properties in Maryland. In 1695, Quaker physician Dr. Mordecai Moore received a 1365-acre land grant called Moore's Morning Choice. Caleb Dorsey, a successful tobacco warehouseman from Annapolis, purchased a portion of Morning Choice in 1732 and gave the land to his son, Caleb, Jr., as a wedding present. In 1738, Caleb Dorsey, Jr., and his wife Priscilla built Belmont mansion, a lovely example of Georgian architecture. Belmont remained in the extended Dorsey family for over 200 years.

The Dorseys, and later the Hansons, of Belmont played a significant part in Elkridge history. As the early 18th century progressed, the surrounding Patapsco Valley became an incubator of industrialization. A ready supply of power from the river, its abundance of natural resources, including ore, and its proximity to the port of the Elkridge Landing made Elkridge a prominent port in Maryland.

In 1917, a direct descendant of Caleb Dorsey, Mary Howard Bruce, and her husband, Howard Bruce, purchased the property and restored the manor house. Before Mr. Bruce died he entrusted the estate to his nephew, David Bruce (a diplomat whose posts included ambassadorships to England, France and Germany as well as envoy to China). In 1963, Mr. Bruce donated the 339-acre estate to the Smithsonian Institution.

The Smithsonian Institution ran it as a world class conference center until 1983 when it sold the manor house and 85 acres to the American Chemical Society, which continued running it as a retreat center. As a condition of that sale, a perpetual easement on the property was donated to the Maryland Historical Trust to ensure the preservation of the historic and scenic values of the property. The remaining 250+ acres of land was sold to the Department of Natural Resources to increase the holdings of the Patapsco State Park and to protect the view-shed of the Belmont Manor House.

In 1989, following the preservation lead of the Smithsonian Institution and the Maryland Historical Trust, surrounding neighbors formed the Rockburn Land Trust, one of the first land trusts in Maryland. Since then, the Rockburn Land Trust, in partnership with the



*Historic Belmont, built in 1738, now part of the Howard Community College campus with an easement held by the Maryland Historical Trust*



*The COMSAT building, designed by Cesar Pelli in 1969, is currently threatened by intense development pressure. Without designation as a Montgomery County Landmark by the County Council, this highly significant structure could be demolished in favor of new construction.*

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# Historic Belmont at Risk

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Maryland Environmental Trust, has accepted 18 easements and preserved 171 acres, including several historic homes, for future generations. The Rockburn Land Trust created the Save Belmont Coalition in response to recent events related to the purchase of Belmont last year.

Last year, the Howard Community College Educational Foundation (HCCEF is the private, fundraising arm of Howard Community College) purchased the Belmont Conference Center from the Chemical Society that had owned and operated the facility for the past twenty-one years. The Foundation is renting the property to HCC to develop their hospitality-training program and to explore new initiatives. HCC's initial plan was to subsidize the purchase of the property by subdividing 20 acres for a housing development. Obviously these plans raised concerns from the preservation community. The plan later was changed to swap Belmont land for state park land for the development. MHT subsequently informed HCC that the development would not conform with the terms of the easement. A new kitchen ventilation was also added to the Manor house, which will likely be required to be removed to a less conspicuous location.

The college is now undergoing a master plan process for both its Columbia campus and the Belmont property. The initial plan includes tripling overnight guest capacity, adding classroom buildings, a covered pavilion and a banquet hall for 300 people as well as building a new access road through the State Park. HCC seems to be signaling that part of its intended growth will take place on the historic property. The concern is to ensure that such growth is consistent with the preservation easements protecting this landmark site.

The Rockburn Land Trust with Preservation Maryland and Preservation Howard County is working with the Maryland Historic Trust, and HCC to ensure that the preservation easement is understood, acknowledged and enforced. Not only is the future of historic Belmont at stake, but the very integrity of perpetual easements is, as well.

*For more information, visit: [www.savebelmont.org](http://www.savebelmont.org), or contact Cathy Hudson at Save Belmont Coalition, 6560 Belmont Woods Road, Elkridge, MD 21075-5201, (410) 796-7232.*

## Legislative Update

### *National: House Hearing on Preservation in the Wake of Katrina*

On November 1, subcommittee chair Mike Turner (R-OH) presided over the House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census to examine local, state, and federal government responses to historic preservation needs resulting from Hurricane Katrina. Testimony raised the issues of broader long term effects of the disaster. Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation stated that "Hurricane Katrina has the potential to become the greatest cultural tragedy the United States has ever seen... We have learned that almost always the first impulse of local officials is to tear down almost every damaged building, leaving many historic buildings needlessly lost in the aftermath. We are determined not to let this happen in the historic Gulf Coast region. The role of government is critical at every level to prevent this from becoming a reality."

The Subcommittee considered the legislative package supported by the National Trust and its partners. It would include a two-year, \$60 million Historic Preservation Disaster Relief Grants Program, to be administered by the states with no federal match. This program would provide immediate federal preservation grant assistance to historic property owners and would supplement any funds from insurance companies, FEMA, and other sources.

The legislative package also calls for the streamlining and adjustment of the existing tax credits for rehabilitating historic commercial structures so that it can work vigorously as a targeted incentive for restoring damaged historic buildings – especially those that house retail stores in business communities; and a new tax credit for homeowners of historic owner-occupied residential buildings that are currently ineligible for restoration incentives. The historic homeowner incentive would provide a 30 percent credit for qualified rehabilitation expenses made by owners who substantially rehabilitate historic homes in the Hurricane Disaster Area. According to a report on the hearing by Preservation Action, John Nau, Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, offered a striking analogy, pointing out that we would never abandon the oil industry but what of the heritage tourism industry?

To learn more about historic preservation issues at the national level, please visit [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org) or [www.preservationaction.org](http://www.preservationaction.org).

In response to the crisis, Preservation Maryland has made contributions to the following organizations: the National Trust for Historic Preservation Hurricane Recovery Fund, the Mississippi Heritage Trust, and the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans to assist their efforts in preserving the remaining historic resources in the region.

# Maryland: 2006 Legislative Agenda

By Tyler Gearhart

The 421st Session of the Maryland Assembly is scheduled to convene on January 11, 2006. Unlike the previous few years, the fiscal analysts for the State are predicting a budget surplus. As this newsletter goes to print, budgets are being developed by the various state agencies and presented for consideration and inclusion in the budget that the Governor submits to the General Assembly for approval.

Most of the budget and legislative issues of key interest to the preservation community are administered by the Maryland Historical Trust, which as of October 1 has been moved from under the Department of Housing & Community Development to Department of Planning. We recently met with Rodney Little, Director of the Maryland Historical Trust and members of his staff to discuss the legislative and budget priorities for the upcoming Session.



*Governor Robert L. Ebrlich, Jr. with Rodney Little, Director of the Maryland Historical Trust and Comptroller William Donald Schaefer in Fells Point to announce the Heritage Tax Credit Awards. Last year, at the Governor's request, Comptroller Schaefer chaired a task force to save the tax credit program.*

We have also met with Audrey Scott, Secretary of the Department of Planning. Secretary Scott has been very supportive of historic preservation, especially the Heritage Tax Credit. She is excited to have the Maryland Historical Trust join her department, and looks forward to combining the staffs of the two agencies. While the location is yet to be determined, our goal is for it to be an historic building, accessible by transit, in Baltimore City.

At its September meeting, the Board of Directors identified the following issues for the 2006 Session:

- \$30 million for commercial projects in the Heritage Tax Credit program and amendments to the program,
- \$2.5 million for operating support for history museums through the Museum Assistance Program,
- \$3 million for the Maryland Heritage Area Authority and the state's 13 Certified and Recognized Heritage Areas,
- \$1 million each for capital and non-capital grant funding for historic preservation,
- Strengthening protections for historic properties affected by State funded and permitted initiatives under the state compliance law,
- Increasing staff for the Maryland Historical Trust preservation easement program, the largest in the nation,
- And increasing support for Main Street Maryland and the 18 designated Main Streets across the state.

We will again be contracting with Robin Shaivitz and the firm of Alexander & Cleaver to advise us on legislative and budget issues and guide our lobby efforts in Annapolis and we are in the process of meeting with the Governor's Office and Members of the General Assembly to prepare the ground work for the upcoming session. Our lobby efforts will be coordinated with the newly formed Maryland Coordinating Committee, which includes the Maryland Association of History Museums, Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions, Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas, Maryland Humanities Council, Archeological Society of Maryland and Main Street Maryland.

As we have in the past, we will be updating you on issues and enlisting your help through our Advocacy Alerts. If you would like to be included, please call Danielle at 410-685-2886 or go to the Advocacy page of our website: [www.PreservationMaryland.org](http://www.PreservationMaryland.org). Thanks!!

## Preservation Maryland and Maryland Historical Trust Award Seven New Grants

### Arabber Preservation Society – Baltimore City

Awarded a \$5,000 grant to support repairs to the Retreat Street Stable. The stable, constructed ca. 1850 and formerly a slaughterhouse, has been used by arabbers for 36 years. It currently houses all but two of the arabbers' horses. Grant funds will contribute to roof repairs, masonry repairs, and carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work.



*Arabber pony showing the distinctive Baltimore dress harness.*

### Brooklyn and Curtis Bay Coalition – Baltimore City

Awarded a \$4,000 grant to assist with the cost of a National Register Historic District nomination for Curtis Bay. Curtis Bay is the southernmost community in Baltimore City, and retains much of its early 20th century industrial character. Notable structures include the Polish Home Hall and a 1931 water reservoir.



*Curtis Bay*

### Carroll County Preservation Commission – Carroll County

Awarded a \$500 grant to assist with the costs of hosting a mini-conference promoting the value of historic preservation in Carroll County. The conference, which will encourage appreciation of Carroll County's 3000 historic sites, structures, and historic districts, will be held in partnership with the Historical Society of Carroll County and Carroll Community College. Topics will include tax credits, character defining features, and restoration of masonry, siding, and windows.

### Holy Temple Church – Wicomico County

Awarded a \$1,000 grant to support the rebuilding of the exterior walls and roof of the Joseph James Hitchens House, which were damaged by fire. The house, which dates to the second half of the 19th century, is attached to a store that represents the earliest African-American owned business in the historically African-American community of West Salisbury. Once complete, the Church plans to convert the structure to housing for the elderly.

### Prince George's County Historical and Cultural Trust – Prince George's County

Awarded a \$1,000 grant to assist with an organizational analysis, a board training and visioning, preparation of new vision and mission statements, and recommendations for short- and mid-term actions. The Prince George's County Historical and Cultural Trust has served Prince George's County since 1968 through public education, the Newell Post architectural salvage program, and the Friends of Preservation newsletter.



*St. Mark's Episcopal Church*

### St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Lappans – Washington County

Awarded a \$1,000 grant to assist with the costs of repairing the masonry wall above the altar window of the sanctuary. St. Mark's, a small gothic revival church near Boonesboro, was built in 1849 and is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Tri-County Council – Cumberland County

Awarded a \$3,790 grant to contribute to the cost of engineering and design services for the rehabilitation of the Von Gunten Music House. The building is a contributing structure in the Cumberland National Register Historic District, and retains many of its original architectural details. When completed, the structure will be a mixed-use project featuring performance art space, storefronts, meeting space, and residential units.

## Maryland Historical Trust Announces Additions to the National Register for Historic Places

### University of Maryland Eastern Shore Princess Anne, Somerset County

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore is significant for its association with the development of higher education for African-Americans in Maryland. The institution began as an academy established in 1886 in an effort to provide higher educational opportunities for black men and women in the region, and grew to become an integral part of the Maryland state university system. The university stands out as the only land-grant institution for black education on the Eastern Shore and one of two in Maryland that were begun during the late nineteenth century.

### Kefauver Place Rohrersville vicinity, Washington County

Located at the foot of South Mountain, the Kefauver Place represents a small-scale farmstead typical of the region. It was established ca. 1820 and evolved through continuous use into the mid-twentieth century. The 21-acre property comprises a ca. 1820 log cabin, a log barn ca. 1830 with additions later in the 19th century; a 19th century timber-framed corn crib; a two story brick house constructed around 1880; an early 20th century masonry root cellar, and a frame summer kitchen, hog pen, chicken house, and garage all dating from about 1930. The buildings and structures are in good condition, having benefited from a recent campaign of rehabilitation.

### Anne Arundel County Rosenwald Schools MPS (Multiple Property Submission)

By providing funds for the construction of school buildings for African-American students throughout the rural South, the Julius Rosenwald Fund was a powerful force in African-American education in the early 20th century. Founded by Sears, Roebuck tycoon Julius Rosenwald, the fund resulted in the construction of 5,357 buildings in 15 states between 1917 and 1932. These architecturally distinctive schools were built according to standardized plans incorporating the latest theories of building design for providing a healthy, learning-conducive environment.

Of the total 292 Rosenwald Schools constructed in Maryland, 23 were erected in Anne Arundel County; 10 of these buildings survive. The first school listed through the MPS is the Marley Neck Rosenwald School in Glen Burnie; nominations are pending for the Churchton/Shady Side and Queenstown Rosenwald Schools as well.

### African-American Historic Resources of Prince George's County MPS

This Multiple Property Submission recognizes the significant role African-Americans played in the history of Prince George's County, as it is reflected in its neighborhoods, houses, churches, fraternal halls, schools, commercial buildings, recreational facilities and entertainment venues. The first five properties listed through the MPS include:

- Butler House, Oxon Hill vicinity
- Abraham Hall, Beltsville vicinity
- Thomas J. Calloway House, Lanham vicinity
- Ridgley Methodist Episcopal Church, Landover vicinity
- St. Mary's Beneficial Society Hall, Upper Marlboro

### Friends Burial Ground Baltimore City

In continuous use since its establishment in 1713, the Friends Burial Ground is the earliest cemetery in Baltimore. Its rows of low, simple grave markers are typical of Quaker cemeteries of the 18th and 19th centuries. Their simplicity and uniformity convey the community's egalitarian principles, and their serried ranks reflect the Quaker emphasis on order. The Friends Burial Ground is associated with the Quaker community whose members played a disproportionately influential role in the early economic and cultural development of Baltimore. Founded in 1792, the Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends included many prominent merchants and industrialists whose activities helped shape the city as it emerged through the first half of the nineteenth century. Friends were involved in a wide variety of industrial, mercantile, and financial interests in Baltimore during a particularly important formative period in the city's history. The fruits of these enterprises provided the means for philanthropy, through which Friends were instrumental in the founding and development of many of the city's early social and cultural institutions.

### Also listed were:

- Moreland, Bethesda, Montgomery County
- Charles Sumner Post #25 Grand Army of the Republic, Chestertown, Kent County

For more information on these listings please visit [www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net/nr.index.html](http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net/nr.index.html)

# 2005 Annual Preservation & Revitalization Conference



photo credit: Rick Lippenz

Emily E. Wadhams, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Bill Pencek, Baltimore City Heritage Areas; and Tyler Gearhart, Preservation Maryland at the Advocacy Luncheon

This year we partnered our Annual Preservation & Revitalization Conference with the National Main Streets Conference for a joint attendance of over 1,800 people, the largest in Main Streets' history. Many of the sessions offered through the Preservation & Revitalization Conference explored successful partnerships between museums and preservation organizations, and between preservationists and their local and state governments. Others presented practical tips on rehabilitation codes, as well as case studies of successful programs and preservation efforts. The Annual Advocacy Luncheon presented participants with the state of preservation efforts on both a state and federal level, providing a recap of the 2005 General Assembly session and laying out the important issues facing the field.



photo credit: Rick Lippenz

Lt. Governor Michael S. Steele with the City of Frederick's Great American Main Street Award Winners



photo credit: Rick Lippenz

Craig Maloney, City of Rockville and Preservation Maryland Board Member Anita Neal Powell at the Maryland Historical Trust Awards Reception



photo credit: Rick Lippenz

Rodney Little, Maryland Historical Trust; Walter Schamu, FAIA, SMG Architects; and Malcolm William Mason, Mason & Associates at the Maryland Historical Trust Awards Reception

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And a special thanks to a major sponsor, Maryland Historical Trust, for their continuing support.

## Tobacco Barns Awarded \$200,000 Save America's Treasures Grant

There is good news about Southern Maryland Tobacco Barns. After these iconic features of our landscape were listed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered List in 2004, Preservation Maryland joined the Southern Maryland Tobacco Barn Preservation Initiative, along with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Maryland Historical Trust, county governments, heritage tourism organizations, and farm organizations to preserve tobacco barns across the five county region. Thanks in large part to the efforts of Congressman Steny Hoyer a \$200,000 Save America's Treasures matching grant has been given for Southern Maryland tobacco barns. Preservation Maryland will be working with our partners to administer the grant.

## The Journey Through Hallowed Ground in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia

"The Journey Through Hallowed Ground" initiative was formed out of a tri-state collaboration in response to development threats to historic sites in the region. This corridor was designated one of America's 11 Most Endangered Places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2005. The 175-mile-long corridor from Gettysburg to Monticello, has seen the march of nationally significant historical events like no other comparable stretch of land. Once hunting ground and a trade route for the Susquehannock and Iroquois tribes, the land was later home to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and others many of whose homes still stand. The corridor itself is now referred to as "The Journey Through Hallowed Ground," holding key African-American historic sites, scenic rivers and byways, and the nation's greatest concentration of Civil War battlefields. This historic landscape is quickly being lost to suburban sprawl. A tri-state public-private collaboration now seeks to find a 21st-century solution to balance economic development and historic preservation in ways that celebrate and protect the region's heritage.

### Paula Riccobono

Preservation Maryland received an IMPART grant for a one-semester internship to help inventory the archives and had the good fortune to select Paula Riccobono, in the Master of Library Sciences program at University of Maryland College Park to fill the position. Although the entire archive inventory is beyond the scope of a semester project, Ms. Riccobono worked tirelessly and created a detailed inventory of records covering fifty years. She wrote a paper detailing that history in the context of the preservation movement in Maryland, including grassroots involvement with the creation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Maryland Historical Trust. Her research has been invaluable as we move forward to documenting and conserving our archives and prepare for the 75th anniversary celebration next year.



Paula Riccobono, archival intern

### Business Manager Phillip McLaughlin:



Phil McLaughlin joins the staff of Preservation Maryland

Phil is a native of Washington County, an ardent fan of local history, and has a fascination with flags and historic maps. He holds a B.A. in History, an M.B.A. from Nasson College, has training and held licenses as a fee appraiser and auctioneer, and worked in banking for twenty-five years, before returning to Maryland from Massachusetts. He is responsible for accounting, human resources, and information technology operations. Phil, his wife, two sons, and two dogs reside in Arcadia.

# Preservation Maryland 2005 Annual Meeting

The 2005 Preservation Maryland Annual Meeting was held at the Maryland Institute College of Art Brown Center on November 9 in conjunction with AIA Baltimore's Affiliates Lecture. A well-known preservation and revitalization pioneer, Mayor Joseph Riley, Hon. AIA, of Charleston, South Carolina attracted almost three hundred people to hear his innovative solutions to challenges in Charleston and his assessment of some of Baltimore's record, much of which drew his praise.



*Mayor Martin O'Malley; Tyler Gearhart, Preservation Maryland; and Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley*

photo credit: J. Brough Schamp

Preservation Maryland presented the George T. Harrison Award for outstanding volunteer contributions to Maryland preservation to Mrs. R. "Polly" F. Shannahan of Easton. A leading preservationist for over sixty years, Mrs. Shannahan joined the Talbot County Historical Society in its early days and helped to found both Historic Easton, Inc., and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. Her long record of achievements includes working to save the 1880 courthouse first from demolition and later from inappropriate expansion. She helped to protect the easement protected property of Myrtle Grove from inappropriate subdivision. She also helped save Easton's old jail, train station, and most recently, a house with significant ties to Easton's African-American heritage. Mrs. Shannahan's tireless work to preserve Easton's architectural legacy have earned the admiration and respect of people throughout the region.



*Tyler Gearhart, Preservation Maryland; "Polly" F. Shannahan, Historic Easton Inc.; and Louise L. Hayman, Preservation Maryland*

photo credit: J. Brough Schamp



*Patricia Bentz, Baltimore County Historical Trust and Wendy McIver, Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission*

photo credit: J. Brough Schamp

This year's Preservation Maryland President's Award for excellence in preservation was awarded to the B&O Roundhouse Restoration partners: B&O Railroad Museum, SMG Architects, Inc., Century Engineering and The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company. Just a few hours after the disastrous February 2003 blizzard collapsed half the roof of the Roundhouse, crushing train cars and exhibits below, the board and staff of the museum summoned a team of experts that shared their determination to save this National Historic Landmark and preserve it for future generations. First they had to solve the riddle of the building's original construction then find a way to solve structural problems that caused the collapse without losing the building's historic integrity. Using modern construction materials and making slight increases to the size of the support structure, the engineers improved the structural capacity without violating the original 1884 design of architect E.F. Baldwin. The stabilization and construction work had to be done while protecting the remaining train cars and allowing removal and preservation of damaged train stock and exhibits. The museum was able to focus the international attention received after the disaster to grow its organizational capacity. In fact, museum membership grew during this period when the museum was closed. Thanks to the remarkable efforts of the Roundhouse restoration team, both the building and the organization emerged stronger than ever before.



*Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley*

photo credit: J. Brough Schamp



*Stanford Britt of East Baltimore Development Inc., posing a question to Mayor Riley*

photo credit: J. Brough Schamp



*Louise L. Hayman, Preservation Maryland; Courtney Wilson, B&O Railroad Museum; Chuck Patterson, SMG Architects; William B. Rockey, Century Engineering; Pamela S. Coleman, Century Engineering; Tyler Gearhart, Preservation Maryland; Jim Brady, B&O Railroad Museum; Francis Smyth, Century Engineering; Mark Senula, The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company; Walter Schamu, SMG Architects*

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