

# the Preservationist

Fall 2008

## Substitute or Replacement Materials



Wooden true divided lights.

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The increasing availability of substitute materials, such as plastic, fiber cement, resin-based and composite building products, coupled with manufacturer's claims of convenience, maintenance free qualities, and "life-time" warranties can make using a substitute material a seemingly attractive option for a historic homeowner. The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is often faced with evaluating the appropriateness of using these products on designated historic properties. Using the guidance of the *Secretary of the Interiors Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, the HPC generally supports the in-kind replacement of building materials too deteriorated to repair. In-kind replacement is defined as using replacement building fabric that exactly matches the old in design, color, texture and material. But in what circumstances may it be appropriate to use replacement materials?

In reviewing a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP), the HPC has to consider a number of issues before making an informed decision. When an applicant proposes a substitute material for replacement of historic fabric, the HPC evaluates the extent to which the replacement material exactly matches the original's shape, texture, style, and visual features. The HPC evaluates the nature of the historic resource, the location of the proposed work on the structure, and the feasibility of repairing the original feature or of replacing it with like materials. For example, slate roofs are important character defining features that, in many cases, are important to retain. Although synthetic slate roofing materials are available, in many cases the use of these replacement materials would not be consistent with the Secretary's Standards and therefore would not be allowed by the HPC. Substitute materials may be appropriate on a non-historic section of the house. For example, the HPC has allowed Hardie Plank® fiber cement siding on a rear addition, even though the historic massing of the house has wood. Windows are another example where the HPC may require repair

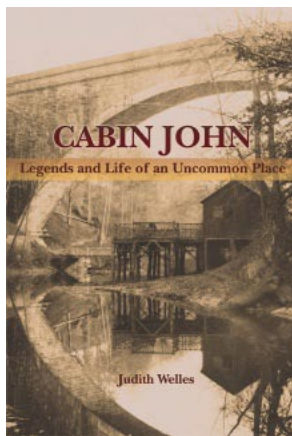
and retention of original windows in the historic sections of the house but would allow an appropriate style new window in a non-historic section of the house.

The historic preservation community continues to study issues surrounding the appropriate use of replacement materials. The HPC regularly assesses its approach based on nationally accepted best practices, local considerations and new and evolving understanding of these products. Staff and Commissioners recently attended an informative workshop hosted by the Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions entitled "Substitute Materials and Replacements: Why We Say No, When to Say Yes," which presented information about appropriate and inappropriate substitute materials for roofs, siding, windows, porches, and landscape features of historic sites. Preservation staff is always available to discuss project proposals, including the appropriate treatment of historic materials, with applicants. The HPC will soon be adopting design guidelines which will explain the principles of preservation and give general guidance to homeowners who may be considering alterations to their house or property. The design guidelines will discuss appropriate and inappropriate substitute materials. These design guidelines will be posted on the Historic Preservation web site, [www.mc-mncppc.org/historic/](http://www.mc-mncppc.org/historic/), and will be announced in a future issue of this newsletter.



Vinyl simulated divided lights.

# Historic Preservation News and Notes



Cabin John: Legends and Life of an Uncommon Place is available at \$15 per copy from the Cabin John Citizens Association at [cabinjohn.org](http://cabinjohn.org).

## Staff Changes in Historic Preservation Section

**Susan Soderberg**, Historic Preservation Education and Outreach Planner, is retiring after ten years of service to the Historic Preservation Section. During her tenure, Susan has taken a fledgling initiative to interpret publicly-owned historic resources, including Oakley Cabin, the Underground Railroad Experience Trail, the Bussard Farm at the Agricultural History Farm Park, and the Riley Farm/Uncle Tom's Cabin, and created a flourishing, widely-recognized program. In addition, Susan has been the face of the section's outreach efforts, working with preservation organizations, community groups, and individuals to promote broad and diverse historic preservation activities.

Countywide Planning Division Chief **Gwen Wright**, who served as supervisor of the historic preservation section for 18 years, has left the Planning Department to become Chief of the Development Division in the City of Alexandria, Virginia, Department of Planning and Zoning. Through her dedication to Montgomery County's historic preservation community, leadership of the Historic Preservation Section, and service to the Historic Preservation Commission, Gwen built a successful, highly respected, comprehensive historic preservation program and earned the respect and admiration of many in the county and beyond. An oral history of Gwen was featured in the Winter 2008 *Preservationist*. The transcript of the entire interview is available at [www.mc-mncppc.org/historic/](http://www.mc-mncppc.org/historic/). Historic

Preservation Section staff will miss Gwen's leadership, bottomless institutional memory, and preservation savvy.

Although saddened by these departures, the Historic Preservation Section is pleased to have two recent additions to the staff. **Rachel Kennedy** joined the Historic Preservation Section in May. Rachel reviews Historic Area Work Permits and administers the county historic preservation tax credit program. Rachel, who spent ten years with the Kentucky Heritage Council, Kentucky's State Historic Preservation Office, has a Master's in Historic Preservation and broad experience in the field.

**Lorin Farris**, a graduate student in the Goucher College historic preservation program, interned over the summer to assist with the evaluation of historic resources in the *Locational Atlas*. Lorin will continue her work this fall, surveying and evaluating additional *Locational Atlas* resources as part of a Certified Local Government grant the county received.

## New Books and Brochures

Cabin John is a rare community that has remained largely untouched by modern development because of the limitations of MacArthur Boulevard, under which lies the main water conduit for Washington. A new book by Judith Welles explores the history of this village, the varied architecture that lies within it, the people who grew up there, and the origins of its name. For a copy of *Cabin John: Legends and Life of an Uncommon Place*, go to [www.cabinjohn.org](http://www.cabinjohn.org) or call 301-229-8110.

A new Arcadia book explores the "then and now" of Germantown, Boyds and Clarksburg. You can find *Around Germantown, Maryland* by Margaret Coleman at most local bookstores.

The Boyds Historical Society has a new map/brochure showing historic sites around the area; and the fledgling Damascus Heritage Society has just put out a brochure to help promote local history and their future museum. Down-county, the railroad towns of Kensington and Garrett Park have both published new Walking Tour brochures. And there is a new brochure on the Rockville Cemetery available at the Civic Center or the city government office.

All of these publications except, *Around Germantown, Maryland*, were made possible in part through Historic Preservation grants.

## the Preservationist

The Preservationist is the official publication of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Phone: 301-563-3400. Statements herein do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Commission. Created by the Historic Resources Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 24A, Montgomery County Code) the Commission is responsible for identification, designation, and regulation for purposes of protection, preservation, continued use, and enhancement of sites and structures of historical, archeological, architectural, or cultural value. Commission members are appointed by the Montgomery County Executive and confirmed by the Montgomery County Council.

### Commission

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Requests to be on the mailing list and content information should be directed to the Commission.

# Amusement Parks of Montgomery County

From the 1890s to the mid-20th century, amusement parks have had an important and varied history in Montgomery County. Glen Echo Park was the most popular and successful park in the county, but there were other short lived and less well known parks such as Bethesda Park, Takoma Park's Wildwood Park, and Chevy Chase Lake. These parks are part of the story of the growth of Montgomery County. They were key components in development initiatives that relied on amusement parks and trolley lines to attract Washingtonians to the area not just to amuse themselves, but to purchase property. This is similar to today's practice of offering free or reduced-price trips to Disney World in exchange for listening to a presentation on purchasing property or a time-share nearby.

These parks were not just marketing ploys, but also provided entertainment for local residents. The story of the the parks' evolution is rich and complicated and reveals much about local and national culture. Glen Echo Park's history, for instance, runs from the Chautauqua movement in the 1890s, through the thrill-ride heyday at mid-20th century, to the painful memories of segregation, and finally to the strong community support surrounding Glen Echo after its closure in the 1970s which lead to its present reincarnation as a cultural arts center.

Bethesda Park lasted a few short but popular years. At its height of popularity, the Park hosted concerts and dances and was continuously adding new rides and other attractions to get people to visit the park multiple times. Chevy Chase Lake was another land speculation scheme that used a large man-made reservoir as its main attraction. Visitors would take a trolley from Dupont Circle to the park and enjoy concerts, bowling, riding, and rowing.

Unfortunately all of these parks were segregated and, as such, a part of the District of Columbia and Montgomery County population had only a brief opportunity to enjoy one of these summer attractions. This painful story is about to be told through a multi-media exhibit in the Chautauqua Tower at Glen Echo Park that is scheduled to open in late 2009. The exhibit will show how the Park was finally integrated after a storm of demonstrations and controversy in 1960.



All of the parks were in some way instrumental in bringing sustained development to the areas of Montgomery County adjacent to the District. The amusement parks were built to attract prospective home buyers to the properties. The trolley lines were built to take these potential buyers out to the amusement parks, and not coincidentally to the properties they could be purchasing. Glen Echo, Bethesda, Takoma Park and Chevy Chase were all to some extent formed because of an interrelated system of land development, trolley service, and amusement parks. Today one can view a great range of architectural styles in these "Streetcar Suburbs," from the architect-designed grand post-Victorian manors of Chevy Case to the craftsman bungalows of Takoma Park to the unique vernacular summer homes in Glen Echo and Cabin John.

The Montgomery County Historical Society will feature an exhibit on Montgomery County's Amusement Parks at their museum in Rockville, opening October 4, 2008. For more information, please visit their website at [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org).

*Dan Gaughey, intern at the Montgomery County Historical Society, contributed to this article.*

*Sign and roller coaster at Glen Echo Amusement Park. (Photo courtesy of the Montgomery County Historical Society.)*



# Calendar

**Exhibit through March 1: *Amusement Parks.*** The amusement parks are part of the story of the County's growth as well as development initiatives, which relied on amusement parks and trolley lines to attract Washingtonians to the area. Beall-Dawson House, 111 West Montgomery Ave., Rockville. Tuesdays through Sundays, 12:30-4:30 p.m. 301-762-1492. [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

**Exhibit, November 19 - March 28: *Department Stores.*** Examines the history of the big stores, the growth, decline and recent resurgence of the downtown D.C. commercial district, and the shopping experience. Waters House, 12535 Milestone Manor Lane, Germantown. Wed. & Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and by appointment. 301-515-2887. [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

**Exhibit, December 2 to January 4: *An 1890s Christmas.*** The classic image of Christmas, with its elaborate greens and over-the-top decorations is pulled from the many pictures of decorated home during this era. Holiday tours end with hot cider and homemade cookies. Beall-Dawson House, 111 West Montgomery Ave., Rockville.

Tuesdays through Sundays, 12:30-4:30 p.m. 301-762-1492. [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

## **October**

**7 (Tues.) & 22 (Wed.)** HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org).

## **November**

**1** *Maryland Emancipation Day*, Open House at the Sandy Spring Slave Museum and at the Josiah Henson Historic Site, Underground Railroad Trail hikes, and a celebration program at Oakley Cabin in Brookeville. See [www.montgomeryparks.org](http://www.montgomeryparks.org)

**12** HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

## **December**

**3 & 17** HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

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