

*HAPPY*  
*40th ANNIVERSARY*



**SOUTH BETHANY**

**September 26, 2009**

## Members of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee



- Co-Leaders, Carolyn Marcello and Mary Suazo did a tremendous job of pulling it all together with the help of the Planning Committee.
- Members of the Planning Committee: John & Celeste Speer, Barbara & Gary Jayne, Terry York, George & Barbara Junkin, Al & Bonnie Rae, Betty Vahey, Sally Baker, Kathy Connor, Jay Headman, Maria Johansen, Sally Baker, Melvin Cusick, Sue Gross, Sue Allenspach, Kathy Jankowski, Mike Matera, Pam Smith, Dee Burbage, Renee McDorman Joe Vogel and Don Chrobot.
- Carolyn Marcello, John Speer, Barbara Junkin & Betty Vahey



- Terry York and Kathy Connor with Sylvia Delaney (Sue Purvis's daughter) and Honey Busby, a long time resident.



The Committee Did An Excellent Job Of Preparing For The Festivities



September 26, 2009

## **PROGRAM**

Welcome: Mayor Gary L. Jayne

Invocation: Carolyn Marcello

Introduction of Town Council

Proclamation

Introduction of Special Guests

Introduction of Former Mayors

Reflections: John Speer

Placement of Time Capsule

Refreshments



## The Program



- Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance. – Mayor Gary L. Jayne.
- The invocation was given by Carolyn Marcello, a long time resident of South Bethany and sister to the late May M. Felerski, South Bethany's first town clerk.



- Reading of the Mayors Proclamation; Gary Jayne, Maria Johansen, George Junkin, Celeste Speer, Barbara Junkin, Terry York, Carolyn Marcello Sally Baker, Mel Cusick, Mike Matera, Sue Purvis, South Bethany Police Chief Joe Deloach.





**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
**PROCLAMATION\***  
*Town of South Bethany 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

**WHEREAS**, South Bethany, a residential community of single family homes on the South Delaware ocean and bay shore was originally part of a land patent known as South Petherton granted in 1695; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1926 George McClellan of Long Island, New York, purchased four adjoining land tracts totaling 140 acres which he conveyed to the Delaware Shore Land Corporation; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1952 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hall purchased about 130 acres from the Delaware Shore Land Corporation and shortly thereafter Mr. Hall, while viewing the property from the top of a dune, decided, "We'll call it South Bethany"; and

**WHEREAS**, Mrs. Hall, citing the need for services which the State did not provide, initiated a move for incorporation as early as 1959; and

**WHEREAS**, after the exceptionally destructive storm of March 1962 when all of the ocean front houses were totally destroyed and it was impossible for residents to secure federal aid to clean up after the storm because South Bethany was not incorporated, the South Bethany Association began a concerted effort toward incorporation; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 18, 1969, Governor Russell signed Senate Bill 246 providing for the incorporation of the Town of South Bethany; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1969 the first Mayor, James Cleveland, and Council were elected and held their meetings in the home of May Fellerski, the first Town Clerk; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1977 the Town received a federal grant to build a Town Hall, and during the tenure of Mayor Ron Steen, the Town Hall was built on land donated by Mrs. Hall, and in 2007 this original Town Hall was demolished and replaced by a new Town Hall and Police Building; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayors and Council members have worked diligently for the Town of South Bethany; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1983 the South Bethany Property Owners Association (SBPOA) was formed to serve as an additional voice for the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the population has grown to 1,392 properties and 600 year round residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the citizens of South Bethany continue to promote the Town's mission statement to develop the Town into a well-maintained, law-abiding, and single-family community serving residents and visitors with an infrastructure committed to the enhancement of a safe, healthy and attractive lifestyle, while preserving and improving the Town's natural and man-made assets; and

**WHEREAS**, South Bethany is "The Best Little Beach in Delaware".

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Gary L. Jayne, Mayor of South Bethany, do proclaim September 26, 2009, as a day of celebration commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Town of South Bethany.

  
Gary L. Jayne  
Mayor, Town of South Bethany

\* Historical information for this proclamation was taken from an article by Gloria C. Cerino titled A Brief History of South Bethany.

# INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS AND TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

## There Were Lots Of Proclamations And Reflections



- The House Of Representatives, State Of Delaware, gave tribute to the Town of South Bethany as “The Best Little Beach In Delaware.” The Tribute was sponsored by Representative Gerald Hocker and signed by Robert F. Gilligan, Speaker of the House, Richard L. Puffer, Chief Clerk of the House, and Gerald Hocker, Representative, 38<sup>th</sup> Representational District.



- Sussex County Councilman George Cole read a proclamation from the County Council for Council President Vance Phillips.

Mayor Jayne introduced the Council Members who were present and acknowledged the contribution that many former Council Members have made to South Bethany through the years.



<i>The Mayors</i>	
James Cleveland	1969-1972
Harold B. Barber	1972-1973
Walter J. Scott	1973-1974
John C. Williamson	1974-1975
Robert S. Terrill	1975-1976
Robert J. McCarthy	1976-1977
Robert L. Steen	1977-1980
Margaret C. Gassinger	1980-1986
Herbert "Joe" Schaefer	1986-1988
Mary Jane Lindblad	1988-1989
Harry Woodruff	1989-1990
Herbert "Joe" Schaefer	1990-2000
Theodore J. Marcucilli	2000-2001
Sal V. Aiello	2001-2002
Donald H. Beck	2002-2004
Gary L. Jayne	2004-Present

- South Bethany had 15 Mayors from the time of Incorporation in 1969 to the present. (Four of the former Mayors are deceased and one is in a home out-of-state.) Six of the former Mayors attended the ceremony and three sent regrets. One was mayor in two non consecutive terms.
- Robert Terrill, Mayor of South Bethany (1975-1976), had to cancel plans to attend but shared remembrances of his time in office. He talked about how he and May Felerski searched for suitable land for a Town Hall. He said that when Mrs. Richard Hall donated the land for the Town Hall she talked about putting tennis courts there also. Bob noted that although many town residents were upset when they passed the lease law for dogs, the rental tax, and the parking passes that these are still in effect today.
- Margaret Gassinger, Mayor of South Bethany (1980-1986) could not attend but commented on the changes in the Town during her six years as Mayor. The first beach replenishment project was initiated during this period. A number of new homes were built when the moratorium on building on the dunes was lifted in 1981. As the town grew so did the Town staff and their duties.
- Harry Woodruff, Mayor of South Bethany (1989-1990) was not at the ceremony but sent word that South Bethany is still the best little town to live in.
- Mayor Gary Jayne introduced the former Mayors in the order in which they served and asked them to say a few words. (see the next pages)



## Six Of The Former Mayors Were Present And Spoke About Their Remembrances Of South Bethany



- Harold Barber, Mayor of South Bethany (1972-1973), spoke about the efforts to get the town incorporated, the pollution entering the South Bethany Canals from septic tanks and of the Town's efforts to create the first Sussex County Sanitary District.



- Robert McCarthy, Mayor of South Bethany (1976-1977), spoke about the Hall Family and the creation of Iggy Hall Park named in honor of the creator of South Bethany, Richard F. Hall. He stated that Mrs. Hall was disappointed that there really was no park, but only a triangular wooded area adjacent to the town hall. Bob tried to improve it with a few picnic tables.



- Ronald Steen, Mayor of South Bethany (1977-1980), spoke about living in South Bethany year round and his house being the only one on his street with a light on in the winter. A comment was made that his daughter was the first person to be born to parents living in South Bethany.

## Six Of The Former Mayors Were Present And Spoke About Their Remembrances Of South Bethany



- Herbert "Joe" Schaeffer, the longest serving Mayor of South Bethany, served two separate terms from 1996-1998 and 1990-2000. Joe talked about the infrastructure of South Bethany and the improvements over the years which included the city water, the sewage system and improvements to the roads. Joe spoke about South Bethany being an extraordinary place, one where you can find all of the best attributes along the East Coast.



- Ted Marcucilli, Mayor of South Bethany (2000-2001) using a whereas clause said that he built his first home in South Bethany on the Ocean side in 1980, and his second and "forever" home on the Bay side in 1993. So whereas, if he wanted to live in a 3 story home with 4,500 sq. feet of living space on a beautiful canal he would be living in South Bethany rather than in Ocean View, in a much smaller place. Ted remembered when there were 60 year-round residents, and now there are 600. He said that South Bethany is a very special place and that we are all lucky to be here.



- Don Beck, Mayor of South Bethany (2002-2004) commented on the contribution to the Town that many former Town Council members have made through the years. He spoke about several major projects that were started during his time as Mayor and completed during the present administration, including the canal dredging and the renovations to the Town Hall. He said that the installation of the propane gas system for the Town was one of the improvements completed while he was Mayor. He also said that he was proud of the fact that his family is four of the 600 permanent residents of South Bethany.



# Reflections by John Speer



John Speer reflected on the contributions of our current Mayor, Gary L. Jayne, who has been our Mayor since 2004. Under Gary's leadership the canals have been dredged, the beach has had an impressive "50 year" replenishment, and the new South Bethany Facilities (Town Hall & Police Station) have been constructed. All being accomplished without putting the Town into debt.

The 40th Anniversary was a time to share memories of South Bethany through the years. For many residents, these memories span three or four generations of pleasant memories of summers spent with children and grandchildren at the beach.

Some of the memories that the early home-owners shared were:

When Richard Hall opened his real estate office, lots were selling for \$800.00. By 1959, lots were selling for \$1,050.

The first two houses were built on the canals in 1953. By 1960 there were several families living along the canals. At that time the canals were not polluted and children spent their days swimming, fishing and boating in the canals.

The 37 homes on the ocean front were destroyed by the storm of 1962. After the storm, Bobby Bounds, a realtor, built several identical homes on the ocean front, actually five of them. Three were built on the ocean front at S.3rd St. and two still remain. Asking price, an astounding \$25,000....and they did not sell quickly.

Columnist Robert Novak, who recently passed away, was the first resident to build ocean front at 1100 S. Ocean Drive after the storm.

In the late 60's and early 70's Ocean Drive as we know it did not exist. There was no north-south road along the beach front, only service roads to houses on the dune. Any driver attempting to go north or south soon found that they were stuck in the sand. Shovels and sheets of plywood were the order of the day for those homeowners who knew better, and they became the AAA of the future Ocean Drive.

Maintenance of the walkways was a constant challenge. The nor'easters and high seas would wash them away leaving a deep drop off from the road. Getting to the beach was a perilous journey at times. Many homes were bulkheaded to help with this problem.

During the 60's and 70's families, especially the teenagers, enjoyed bonfires on the beach at night. Residents had to obtain a permit from the Town Clerk for the bonfires.

There were many changes to South Bethany by 1972. York Beach and Paradise Shores were annexed to South Bethany. The Beach Patrol was established in 1971 and South Bethany hired its first Police Officer.

# South Bethany – Through The Years A Time Line

## Sixties

- '62 – "The Perfect Storm"
- '69 – Incorporation Finalized
- '69 – '77 "Town Hall", Mae Fellerski's House
- '69 – 240 Homes, 15 Year Rounders

## Seventies

- '71 – First Life Guards
- '72 – Sewer Installation Commences
- '72 – Tennis Club Founded
- '72 – First Police Officer
- '72 – York Beach & Paradise Shores Annexed
- '77 – Town Hall Constructed

## Eighties

- '83 – SBPOA Formed
- '83 – 748 Homes, 105 Year Rounders
- '87 – Cat Hill & Sandpiper Developed

## Nineties

- '92 – Neighborhood Watch Begins
- '98 – Town Water Becomes Available
- '98 – Another Devastating Nor Easter
- '99 – Beach Replenishment

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- '08 – New Town Hall & Police Station Constructed
- '08 – "50 Year" Beach Replenishment
- '09 – 1,266 Homes, 600 Year Rounders
- '09 – South Bethany Celebrates 40 Years



# Highlight Of The Day Was Burying, By The Mayors, The Time Capsule Containing Newspapers, Newsletters, SBPOA Telephone Book, History Of Incorporation And Other Interesting Paraphernalia





## People Enjoying The Refreshments and Reflections





## Many "Old Timers" Brought Memorabilia, Mostly Photographs, From The Olden Days



The summer of 1971 heralded our first life guards. The life saving "torpedoes" were welded galvanized metal and quite heavy and cumbersome. They were soon replaced with a lighter Styrofoam model. Each pictured below. Since SB had no maintenance facilities; life guard stands and equipment were stored in the garage of a N.2nd Street resident.



## The Nor'easter of March 1962 Was A Turning Point In The History Of South Bethany



Ocean Drive before 1962



Ocean Drive after March, 1962 Nor'easter



South Bethany after March, 1962 Nor'easter, Aerial Photo from DeIDOT



## Many Of The Original Houses Are Still Here



**1953.** This is the first house built in South Bethany. It still exists and is located at 10 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street. It was used by Richard F. Hall for his real estate office. Current picture taken **2003**

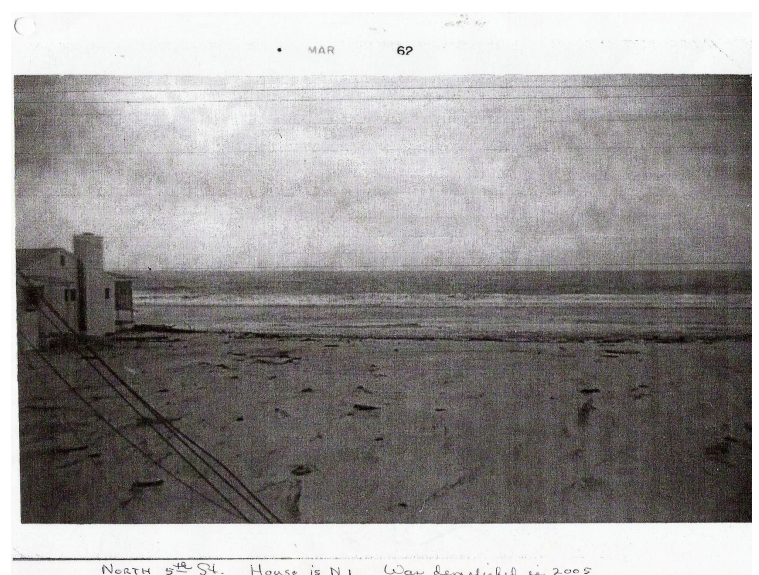


**1955.** May Fellerski's house, used as the South Bethany Town Hall from 1969 through 1976. It still exists and is located at 5 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Current picture taken **2003**

## More Before And After Photos



**April 1960**, 1 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St. is in the foreground, 502 N. Ocean Dr. is in the Background.



After **March 1962** Nor'easter, 1 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St. is still there, 502 N. Ocean Dr. has disappeared.



The house currently at 502 N. Ocean Dr. is not quite as large as the house that was there before the 1962 Nor'easter



1 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St. was still there in the summer of **2003**. It has since been torn down and a new house is in its place.



## Did You Know That There Used To Be An Assawoman Bay Yacht Club (ABYC)?

The Assawoman Bay Yacht Club, headquartered in South Bethany, was incorporated in the State of Delaware on August 15, 1975, with an original membership of twenty-two. In 1985 its membership was about thirty.



Top Row (L to R): Wally Gander, Ellen Schaeffer, Helen Williams, Jack Williamson, Sherwood Booth, Bish Williamson, Charlie Shuffle, Bob Terrill.

Front Row (L to R): Ruth Gander, Helen Terrill, Ruth Cleveland, Martha Shuffle, Marge Gassinger



## Over 150 People Attended The Festivities, Enjoying The Fellowship, Memorabilia and Refreshments

