

FRONT PAGE

Newsletter of the *Carroll County
Land Trust*; March 2010 addition.

Historic Strawbridge Shrine Farm Preserved

The historic Strawbridge Shrine Farm located just south of New Windsor in the Wakefield Valley, has been permanently preserved following a cooperative effort of the Carroll County Land Trust, Strawbridge Shrine Association, and the Commissioners of Carroll County following efforts dating back to 2003.

The Shrine is named after Robert Strawbridge an indispensable figure in the history of Methodism. In the early 1760s, Robert and his wife, Elizabeth Strawbridge, already enthusiastic followers of John Wesley in Ireland, emigrated to America and settled in what is now Carroll County, Maryland. They settled on a farm rented from a Quaker, John England, and immediately opened their log-cabin home for religious services. By so doing, Robert became *the first Methodist preacher in America*. His popularity grew, and his congregation of frontier families increased. In 1764, he built his Log Meeting House, often called *the first Methodist chapel in America*.

Robert traveled widely in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, preaching and establishing Methodist “societies” and “class meetings”, most of which became Methodist churches. While Robert was traveling, Elizabeth led

Sunday services at home on the farm, and with help of neighbors who sympathized with Robert’s work, kept the farm together. It was during one of Robert’s absences that Elizabeth was responsible for converting a neighbor, John Evans. Thus she was credited with *the first Methodist conversion in America*.

The Strawbridge Shrine consists of the original Strawbridge home, the John Evans House which was moved to the site in 1978 from a farm about 5 miles away, a replica of the Log Meeting House built in 1982, and two granite statues of Robert and Elizabeth Strawbridge.

The Strawbridge Shrine Association was formed in 1937 to preserve the history of Robert Strawbridge’s ministry. After several unsuccessful attempts at purchasing the farm, in 1973 the Association was successful in purchasing 32 acres of the Robert Strawbridge Farm along with the original farm house. Since that time the Association has maintained the property and built a curator’s house with a visitor center in the basement floor. All buildings on the Shrine grounds have been fully furnished. Pictures, directions, visitation, etc., can be found at www.strawbridgeshrine.org.

Renewed discussions on the possibility of permanently preserving the Farm began in 2006. While adjoining farm land had been permanently preserved under the County’s agricultural land preservation program, the special significance attached to this farm, argued strongly for its inclusion and permanent preservation. The opportunity to receive a purchase payment for the value of the preservation easement was a natural

incentive for the Association, a non-profit organization like the Carroll County Land Trust both of which function on modest budgets and depend primarily on financial contributions and individuals who volunteer their time. In this case, the Carroll County Land Trust jumped at the opportunity to assist with and help facilitate the creation of a preservation easement on this farm. In 2007, Phil Snader of the Association and Ned Cuman of the Carroll County Land Trust determined a current survey of the Association's holdings was needed. The Association subsequently contracted with RTF & Associates of Westminster to perform a boundary survey to determine the precise acreage of the farm---which is 29.3 acres. In 2008, the Carroll County Land Trust agreed to contribute and pay the easement settlement expenses. Finally, in 2009, in consideration of \$107,289 dollars, the Association granted a Deed of Conservation Easement to the County Commissioners of Carroll County permanently preserving the farmland on this historic farm. The transaction, also closed a donut whole, as it were, in an otherwise expansive block of contiguous land preservation easements in the Wakefield Valley. Consummation of the easement purchase will concurrently enable the Association to move forward with plans it has to further enhance and preserve the existing Shrine buildings and structures and add needed new improvement to the site. For the County, the Strawbridge Association and the Carroll County Land Trust, this was a win-win-win endeavor, the result of which will carry forward an important part of this County's heritage to the benefit of future generations. ****

(Reverend William Boyer, a former pastor at Sandymount Methodist Church and Ned Cuman,

both Board Members of the Carroll County Land Trust, contributed to this article).

Agricultural and Conservation Land Preservation Easement Activity in Carroll County

Overall, the number of landowners placing land under agricultural and preservation easements continued at a steady pace this past year. Farms totaling an additional acres were permanently preserved, bringing the County total to nearly in pursuit of its goal of 100,000 acres of permanently preserved land. Landowners placing permanent easements on their land this past year are invited to be recognized at the CCLT's **Annual Dinner Meeting April 15** as guests of the County Commissioners.

Annual Dinner Meeting

Hold the Date: **April 15th 6:30 P.M.**
meet 'n greet; **Dinner: 7:00 P.M.** **New Windsor Fire Hall.** **Program:** Annual Farmland Preservation Program Update; **Landowner preservation recognitions** by County Commissioners; and *Alice Mildred Shipley Award* by Carroll County Land Trust Board. **RSVP no later than April 9, 2010 (see form enclosed with Dinner RSVP details)**

BEQUESTS

For those who wish to remember the Carroll County Land Trust, Inc. in their wills, the following form is suggested:

I give and bequest to the Carroll County Land Trust, Inc., for its general purpose the sum of \$ _____.

Contact Information:

Carroll County Land Trust, Inc.

P.O. Box 2137 Westminster, MD 21158

Phone: 410-848-8247 The Carroll County Land Trust, Inc. is a local non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with an open membership and members who contribute annually. We welcome new members to help further the mission of land preservation in Carroll County.

