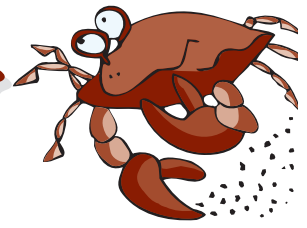




The WEIKEL

# Tipster



Political News from AA County Democratic Central Committee Member Chuck Weikel

Hello and welcome to the first edition of the **Weikel Tipster**.

We are dedicated to the idea that politics of principle is a good thing – for ourselves, our families and our communities. It's how we connect with our government and select the individuals to lead us.

As one of your elected officials representing Annapolis and District 30 on the Anne Arundel County Democratic Central Committee, I want to energize, embolden and organize the party. The first step in that process is communication and gaining a better understanding of the issues that confront us. This newsletter, **The "Weikel Tipster"** is a first step in that process.

I want to talk about a variety of issues – from the environment to smart growth to traffic, transportation & parking issues, to equal access to community infrastructure, social justice – and how County Democrats are impacting them. I also want your input. Please send an email to me at [cweikel@mac.com](mailto:cweikel@mac.com) with your ideas and suggestions. So let's get underway and enjoy the cruise!

**Chuck**

## **The Community Moves Transportation Forward**

By *Chuck Weikel*

Finding solutions to transportation issues is not always easy. Especially when the community and city must interact to bring better services to citizens, businesses and visitors.

There is no doubt about the need. Downtown Annapolis cannot get enough employees downtown to fully inhabit second and third floor space in many buildings. This is a damper on maintaining a vital downtown and can even create situations where fire safety is compromised.

As a downtown resident myself and as the former chair of the citizen run parking committee, we instituted a number of changes to make downtown parking easier, especially for citizens of the city of Annapolis. These changes include extending a 2-hour free parking program for all city residents at all city garages -- this encourages those who are the best customers of our businesses -- those who live closest, the citizens of Annapolis. Of course, this is of no value at times when the garage is full. Since 2005 the city has been decreasing the number of monthly permits in the garage, albeit slowly. It has also instituted a valet program that takes over 400 vehicles off our streets on city weekends.

Starting in November 2006, the city became only one of 7 municipalities to offer a free fare zone to encourage transit ridership in the downtown corridor. This extends from the Spa Creek bridge to the Westgate Circle. Any bus you get on is free to any destination in the Annapolis Transit route system. The effect is to lower the roundtrip cost into and out of the downtown core by 1/2 and makes every bus into a free shuttle within this zone. Ridership is up and the program is working.

Of course, improvements can be offset -- more people are bringing more cars downtown. The trend in car ownership continues upward, from less than one car

See **Transportation**, continued on Page 2.

## **ARE OYSTERS DEMOCRATS?**

It is certainly possible. A number of initiatives are being sponsored by Democrats that will positively impact the Bay and our environment. These include:

◆ **Mayor Ellen Moyer** continues into the sixth year of being the most pro-environment Mayor the city has had. This includes major efforts at restoration of Annapolis' creeks and waters, controlling damaging run-off and preserving and restoring wet lands. A strong believer in the power of education, Ellen was trained by Al Gore to facilitate his acclaimed environmental seminar that the movie *An Inconvenient Truth* was based upon. This is being presented to legislators, city staff and citizens alike (to sign up for a seminar call the Mayor's office at 410.263.7997)

◆ **County Councilman Josh Cohen** is working with county planning staff to implement the zoning called for by the 2003 Annapolis Neck Small Area Plan. This will limit the development potential along environmentally sensitive peninsulas south of Forest Drive and help to protect the residential character of the Neck. Josh is also preparing a package of bills to reduce rainwater runoff, protect creeks from sediment and erosion, and generally require more environmentally friendly development.

◆ **Speaker Mike Busch** is pushing forward legislation that will help restore oyster beds. Oysters were once an integral part of the Bay's

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# The Weikel TIPSTER

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Co-Founder, Mayor's Book Club  
Founder, Positive Voices

## The Rumor Mill · juicy news to know about people and events in our District

### Is Mayor Moyer about to resign?

That's the word on the street with many Democrats and Republicans alike. They expect Mayor Moyer to get a big appointment with the O'Malley administration and move onto to supposedly greener pastures.

Posturing has already begun. Republicans are said to even be raising money for an imagined special election. Some also seem to think that if she were to resign then her successor would get appointed by her or the city Democratic Central Committee.

**Our Take – Very Unlikely!** Ellen Moyer has spent 40 years devoted to Annapolis and its issues as a civic activist and elected official. She has great affinity for her role as mayor, a job that fits her well. It strains credibility to believe she would up and leave not even half way through her second term. The best rumor buster is Ellen herself – “It's simply not going to happen” she told the **Weikel Tipster**.

**Transportation**, continued from Page 1.  
per household in the 1960s to over 2.5 cars today. This has created a situation where there are over 3 permits for every downtown on street space. And, yes, downtown residents do feel strongly that they want to maintain access to their preferred method of mobility -- the automobile.

Extending downtown resident parking hours were pushed for by downtown residents for a number of years. The parking committee first considered this idea in 2004 but would not endorse this proposal until the Mayor's 8-point parking plan was achieved in 2006. The legislation was introduced by Alderman Israel in January 2006. At this time, both resident and businesses on the parking committee agreed to support this trial plan. The legislation was then held by him in March 2006, re-introduced in July 2006 and passed council in November 2006. During this time there were full hearings on the legislation, including parking committee meetings and two A-1 stories about it in

*The Capital*. It is a trial plan that must be renewed by November of 2007 to remain in effect.

Downtown businesses are our neighbors and friends. Much rests on sustaining a vital economic base downtown, from keeping crime in check to historic preservation itself. Yet, undoubtedly, they will face a period of change in the next few years as city dock work begins, Parole opens and new proposals are being floated about mandatory sprinkler systems. Foot traffic was down in 2006 and we must assist business where we can. Parking is a big part of that.

Finally, I will add that the taxi valet program offers 'door-to-door' ride service from the door of the restaurant to the door of their cars for employees after shuttle hours. Employees are allowed to get into their cars and are watched by the taxi driver until they drive away -- they are not abandoned at their vehicles. Although to date lightly used, this program needs to be revised and improved.

A partnership has developed that has worked very hard over the past few years to improve the downtown transportation situation. It made progress. Nevertheless, there is more to do and we must continue to push for improvements that are fair to all.

### Oysters, continued from Page 1.

symbolic environment. Oysters filter the Bay and are a way to help clean the Bay. Mike also successfully supported the Maryland Healthy Air Act last year which would require coal-burning power plants to significantly reduce toxic emissions, and in 2007 he is supporting the Clean Car Act which will improve emissions standards for all cars registered in Maryland.

So it is likely that if an oyster could, it would – vote Democratic.

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Jim Turner, Treasurer*