



CECILTON – THE WAY LIFE SHOULD BE

BY MARK DAVIS, MRWA CIRCUIT RIDER

One of my earliest memories from all my travels as a Circuit Rider for Maryland Rural Water is two adjacent parking spaces at a Royal Farms in Cecilton, Maryland. If there ever was a picture that could be used to describe the word juxtaposition, what I was looking at was perfect. On my left was a parking space, clearly marked on the blacktop, “Electric Vehicles Only.” At the front of the space was a brand-new DC Fast Charging Station ready for use. On my right was a space with a sign on a post that read, “Buggy Parking Only.” At the front of the space was a hitching post, a bucket and shovel, and a water hose ready for use. There was no printing on the blacktop, but there was evidence that the space had recently been properly occupied.

What was most fortunate for me that day is that I was not there to fill up my car and move on, but I was making my first stop at Town Hall to meet the individuals responsible for keeping the water flowing in Cecilton. My first memory of Cecilton is that of a parking lot. My second memory is that of the cool bank that has been converted into a town hall and all the pictures and memorabilia on the walls. My third memory of Cecilton is of the greeting I received when I arrived at Town Hall. Have you ever hand-cranked an old-time fire siren? Then you know it took effort and time to produce that familiar sound. In my early days as a Circuit Rider, it often took several visits to a town before the relationship bloomed. Not so in Cecilton, I swear it was like in minutes I was treated like family. I felt like I could go to the fridge and get a drink without asking.

If I had done my homework and researched the town just a little, then I would not have been so surprised by the

warm welcome. On their webpage, you can read, “For new residents and those that are well established, Cecilton strives to provide a lifestyle you want to come home to! Family, friends, and community – these are our highest values and what we endeavor to maintain and promote. Welcome to one of the friendliest small towns in the country.” The Town’s motto is, “The Way Life Should Be.” These words are lived out by the town’s employees and by residents of the town. I see it every time I visit.

To tell you a little about the history of Cecilton, I “borrowed” this from their webpage. “The town of Cecilton owes its existence to Augustine Herman, an immigrant to America in 1633 and some-time friend and ally of New Amsterdam Governor Peter Stuyvesant. He was the builder and first Lord of Bohemia Manor in Cecil County, founder of a long line of distinguished descendants, and subject of heroic legend. Herman made several attempts to establish a town named for his friend Cecilius Calvert in lower Cecil County, but, uncharacteristically, he was not successful. Several generations later, a descendant again took up the task and founded a town that survived. That was Cecilton, incorporated in 1864.”

Cecilton is truly a quiet residential community. The town’s current population is 677. It is comfortably nestled by farmland all around. Much of this farmland has been placed in agricultural preservation programs, ensuring that the area will maintain its rural character. Driving to and from Cecilton I get to enjoy the beautiful countryside that surrounds this town. I can see why the Amish have found this area so attractive. There are only three Amish communities in Maryland and one of them is near the Town of Cecilton. That explains the parking spot at the Royal Farms.



Town business is handled by a staff of four, seasonal help swells the workforce to six during the warmer months. Mary Cooper is the Town Administrator. It only takes a few minutes at town hall to know that she cares for the town, cares for the residents, and cares for those in her charge. Walk around town and you can see her dedication to Cecilton reflected in the appearance of the town. On nicer days you may catch Mary making her rounds on her bike. Also, in the town hall, you have a treasurer, Kim Roland, and a clerk, Teresa Quinn, making Mary's life a whole lot easier. They are both wonderful people, always welcoming and friendly. Both always have a bowlful of candy sitting on the front of their desks. That is another of my fond memories of Cecilton. I always say that clerks and treasurers are at the frontlines of the water business. They are usually the first to take the phone call for water issues. Something just occurred to me: I have never seen an irate water customer come into Town Hall. In fact, I have never seen an irate person in the town.

Cecilton contracts its water and wastewater treatment to Susquehanna Operational Services, an outstanding company that serves Cecilton well. The distribution system, collection system, and everything else a town needs to be maintained falls into the lap of the town's Maintenance Supervisor, Brandon "Bubby" Jackson. Brandon takes pride in what he does and works tirelessly to get it done right. He has my utmost respect. He is a rock star in my book, and I mean that sincerely. Oh, yeah, by the way, he is an actual rock star, in a band called Jackson Station. Assisting Brandon are two seasonal support staff, Jake and Matt Cooper. These two young men are a big help to the town. They work hard, and I believe they both have a bright future ahead of them.

The Town of Cecilton maintained a water system that consisted of two wells, a water treatment plant, one tower, approximately four miles of distribution lines, and 317 water meters. That was in 2017. In the spring of 2018, almost overnight, the town's water accounts more than doubled to 652 and the length of the water system increased by 14 miles. The Town of Cecilton had once again lived up to its motto and helped its neighbors over seven miles away when the wells in these communities were deemed unsafe to drink.

The one thing that did not increase was the number of people serving the system. Mary, Kim, Teresa, and Brandon took on the monumental task of administrating and maintaining a distribution system that had doubled the number of customers served and quadrupled in miles of pipe maintained. In 2023, these four amazing people, along with Susquehanna Operational Services, have continued to provide safe and reliable water services to their town and the communities outside of town. I have enjoyed every single minute of my time spent in Cecilton. I have made many lasting memories assisting this town with water-related issues. I am amazed at the amount of work this small staff gets completed and the attitude displayed when adversity arises. They are truly deserving of being honored.

In May of this year, Cecilton received the 2023 Maryland Rural Water Association Water System of the Year Award at our annual conference in Ocean City. 🍷



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