

Life On and Near the Water: Changing Socioeconomics via the Maritime Museum and Eastport

Questions to guide your reading, thinking, and walking:

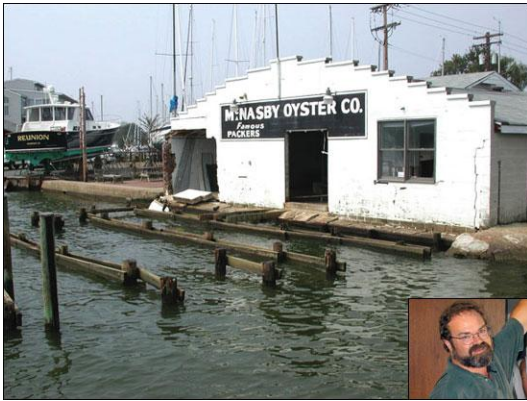
1. Domestic architecture is a roadmap of the socio-economic characteristics of a community and changes in that community over time. What do the residences in the blocks surrounding the Maritime Museum tell you about the changing socioeconomic makeup of the area?
2. What kinds of occupations and trades did the residents of “old Eastport” follow? Do you need to go to the Maritime Museum to learn about these occupations and trades or can you still find evidence of them on the streets of old Eastport today?
3. Integrations or Segregation? How did blacks and whites work and live on the Eastport Peninsula—together, apart, or a bit of both?
4. People with great wealth have moved to the Eastport peninsula during the past 20 years to be close to the water and to enjoy the ambiance of the old working –class neighborhood of Eastport. How has the arrival of these new and wealthier residents helped and harmed the neighborhood? Should Eastport have something like the Historic District Commission in downtown Annapolis, which was created to ensure that new buildings fit in to the existing streetscapes?

These questions come to you courtesy of Dr. Gregory Stiverson, noted Annapolis historian and preservationist, who will join us for our City-as-Text wrap up.

Please bring this page with you to the conference and on your City-as-Text experience. Feel free to print and bring the entire file of information.

Annapolis Maritime Museum

723 2nd St



www.mdsg.umd.edu

Accessed February 7, 2009 (both from same source)

The McNasby building boasts the exceptional historical significance as the last remaining oyster-packing plant in our region. Once a huge industry in Annapolis, seafood harvesting and shipping are just about obsolete, yet the images of workboats and the hard-working watermen and shuckers continue to be the basis of our region's identity. There is no better way to experience this local maritime story than in the last surviving structure of a vanishing regional industry. The first major exhibit, "Oysters on the Half Shell," will provide that experience in a dramatic and captivating manner, incorporating hands-on, inter-active components.

Meanwhile, we're also running "full steam ahead" with our day-to-day projects and programs, providing our maritime education and services to the community. In 2007 alone, we:

- Inaugurated four award-winning education programs for 8th graders and 4th graders as well as elementary after-school initiatives and "Treasure Our Water" in partnership with Watermark
- Launched public tours to the Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse
- Organized the award-winning Capt. John Smith 400 Festival at City Dock
- Produced our sold-out Winter Maritime Heritage Seminar Series, and
- Hosted the popular Summertime Maritime Concert Series at the Museum and City Dock enjoyed by more than 2,000 visitors

in 2008 we intend to do all that, bigger and better, at the same time bringing the McNasby building back to life.

<http://www.amaritime.org/heritage.html> Accessed February 7, 2009

Overview of Historic Maritime Annapolis



When the first English settlers arrived here aboard a ship in 1649, they found a pristine Chesapeake Bay with an abundance of seafood and a native American population that had been living from the bounty of the Bay and the land for centuries.

From their small, hand-built boats, the first Europeans gathered oysters and caught fish and crabs to feed their growing families, and grew their own crops. They also grew tobacco for trade. In these early days, long before we knew that smoking tobacco can kill people, growing "sotweed" was the way the wealthiest people here made their money.



After the town of Annapolis was founded in 1695, it became an important port for shipping barrels of tobacco to England. Sailing ships returned from across the Atlantic Ocean and up the Bay to Annapolis Harbor with an amazing assortment of goods for sale. Some ships also brought slaves, like the one in 1767 that brought a man from Africa named Kunta Kinte.

After the Revolutionary War, Annapolis Harbor gradually lost most of its shipping business to the growing Port of Baltimore. The large, ocean-sailing ships that once packed Annapolis Harbor were replaced by smaller boats that were used to harvest

oysters, crabs and fish on the shallow waters of the Chesapeake.



Oysters were the biggest money-maker in the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. Watermen gathered oysters with dredges and long-handled shaft tongs



and brought their catch to one of the many oyster packing plants surrounding the harbor. Men and women, and sometimes even children, shucked the oysters and packed them in cans. Canning allowed the oysters to last longer, so they could be shipped by railroads and steamships to as far away as the Rocky Mountains.

Boatwrights and craftsmen worked in boatyards surrounding the local creeks to build and repair boats for the watermen. Many of these were located in the Eastport peninsula, across the harbor from Annapolis proper. Earlier on, the little peninsula was devoted to farms for raising crops and racehorses. After the town was founded in 1868, most of the working residents, both black and white, made their living from the seafood industry, in the boatyards or at the Naval Academy.

During World War II, boats were built in Eastport for the British and Russian navies. Later, the Trumpy family built world-renowned luxury yachts there. As the oyster business ebbed, the watermen's workboats were replaced by sailboats and powerboats used for having fun out on the Bay.



Today, Annapolis is known as "America's Sailing Capital." Major national and international sailing events take place here and the harbor is filled with vessels of all sizes and shapes year-round.

Tour boats and boat rentals provide opportunities for families without boats to spend a day on the water. Water taxis are fun way to get a boat ride across the Harbor.

The history of Annapolis cannot be told without telling the stories of the Chesapeake Bay. Our ancestors came here by water. We are here, most of us, because of the water. The Annapolis Maritime Museum is telling the story of our connection to the water.

<http://www.amaritime.org/history.html> Accessed February 7, 2009

Note: Maritime Seminar Series

March 26

Oyster Wars of the Chesapeake Bay by John R. Wennersten

Dr. Wennersten, Professor Emeritus of American History at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, will discuss the *Oyster Wars of Chesapeake Bay*, first published in 1980 and still in print. The oyster industry is both an historical and ecological metaphor of the Chesapeake's fate. The lowly oyster sired a major industry that at one time led to the extraction of 15 million bushels of oysters from the Chesapeake annually in the 1880s. Today the Chesapeake oyster and the oyster industry are sad relics of bygone times. Wennersten notes that what the oyster might tell us is this: if we don't pay attention to conserving and protecting a living Chesapeake, we most certainly will pay attention to a dead one. Dr. Wennersten now lives in Washington, DC, where he writes a syndicated columnist on environmental affairs for the Chesapeake Quarterly. Recently he has written two books that deal with regional environmental history: *Chesapeake: An Environmental Biography* and a new work forthcoming in October, *Anacostia, The Death and Birth of An American River*.

The seminars take place at the Museum's newly renovated McNasby Oyster Company building at 723 Second Street in Eastport, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. There will be one hour of presentation, followed by a discussion period.

Enrollment fees for Museum members are \$60 per person for the full series or \$10 per seminar. For non-members, fees are \$95 for the series or \$15 per seminar. To enroll, call the Museum at 410-295-0104.

Sailors' Delight

Eastport is what Annapolis was twenty years ago—a boater's paradise with small-town values and a tight-knit community.

Written By Vicki Meade
Photography By John Bildahl
Sept/Oct 2005

Last spring, as Rosemary Freitas Williams and her electrician were poking around the cellar of her Depression-era Eastport home, they discovered folded yellowed papers wedged between some stair treads.

The papers, dated September 19, 1933, were official forms declaring the insanity of one John Smith, a sixty-seven-year-old carpenter who had become violent after fracturing his skull a month earlier.



Williams had plucked from that hiding place a shred of someone's life story—a reminder of the working class that shaped Eastport, a longstanding community of watermen and laborers on a peninsula a stone's throw from downtown Annapolis. Smith no doubt

suffered a workplace accident in this village of boat builders, whose shipyards are now mostly defunct.

In Eastport, connected to the mainland by a wooden bridge in 1868 and annexed by the city of Annapolis in 1951, a hardscrabble past makes the present all the more interesting. Newcomers who can afford the escalating real estate costs are snapping up modest cottages and bungalows, narrow rowhouses, and Victorians that grace the landscape.



Williams, age forty-six, a former television producer, now a watercolor artist and restorer of old houses, epitomizes the new Eastport denizen, someone at a crossroads who wanted a better quality of life, a sense of community in a down-to-earth place with a vibrant history. “I was always on the go, juggling three pagers, two cell phones, a BlackBerry, covering a plane crash in Pennsylvania one day, the Democratic Convention in Chicago the next,”

says Williams, a Massachusetts native whose journalism career landed her in Washington, D.C. She won an Emmy for her work at MSNBC before deciding to quit the rat race in 2002 and stay in Eastport full time, where she’d bought a one-bedroom bungalow on Severn Avenue a couple of years earlier. “From the start, I wanted to figure out how I could stop leaving this place every day.”

Albert Jones, an Annapolis firefighter who grew up on Burnside, along with his twelve siblings, says, “We were in the creek all the time, crabbing, fishing, boating, ice skating.” Now million-dollar homes, renovated from humble beginnings, dominate the spot where Jones once waded with his fishing pole. “I remember when you couldn’t give homes on the waterfront away,” he continues. “This was a real working class place. We always said that the Naval Academy couldn’t exist without the workers from Eastport.”

Eastport traces its beginnings to 1665, when Robert Clarkson, a Quaker, was granted a tract called Horne Point. Colonists built a fort there in 1776 to defend the capital during the Revolutionary War. Later, Benjamin Ogle, Maryland’s governor from 1798 to 1801, acquired the land. In 1868, a group of Annapolis businessmen bought 102 acres of farmland and divided it into lots, which they sold to tradesmen, immigrants, and blue collar workers who constructed buildings at the Naval Academy.

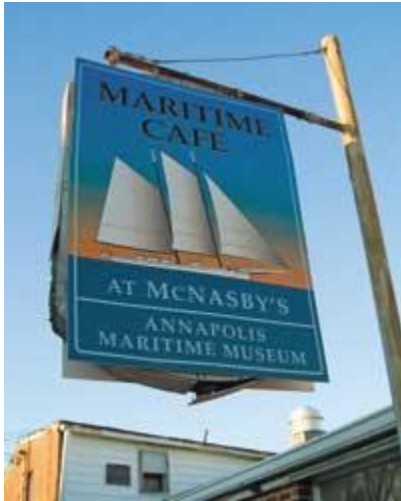
“White and black families built homes here and worked side by side,” explains Peg Wallace, an Eastport resident since 1965, who in 1997 helped develop the self-guided Eastport Historic Walking Tour. Signs along the route call attention to landmarks celebrating Eastport’s working heritage, including homes, boatyards, and the site of the defunct Annapolis Glass Works on Second Street. Charles



Murphy founded the factory in 1885 to manufacture bottles for beverages and medicines—and he also gave Eastport its name, after his native city in Maine.

Water dominates the Eastport landscape, bordered by Spa Creek to the north, Back Creek to the south, and the Severn River to the east, where it meets the Chesapeake Bay. The bulk of Eastport's streets, laid out in a grid, are quiet and residential, with a small town feel. Thanks to a maritime zoning ordinance passed in 1987, much of Eastport's shoreline is devoted to boating-related businesses such as marinas, sailmakers, and boating suppliers—no large-scale condo developments are allowed. “We didn't want a ‘Manhattan on the Bay,’” says Wallace, a realtor who lobbied for development restrictions.

Eastport's sought-after location has driven housing prices up 26 percent in the past eighteen months, and even a modest three-bedroom on the waterfront can sell for two million dollars. Even so, “Eastport will always be a little funky and rundown,” Wallace notes, “with tools, ropes, and battered stuff near the water, reminding us what made this a viable community.”



The funkiness is contagious. Bridget Bell Webber, former financial consultant, now author and mother of two boys, ages six and eight, was skeptical when her then-husband bought a house in Eastport in 1996 and uprooted her from D.C. Now, she says, “It's wonderful here, eclectic and quirky, a lot like the town where I grew up [Woodstock, N.Y.]. If I want to run out for a coffee in my pajama bottoms, I can.” Stroll the narrow streets—paved with oyster shells before asphalt took over—to admire colorful doors and shutters, second-floor decks, yards brimming with flowers, and vine-laced fences. Here a mailbox shaped like a gaping-mouthed fish, there a row of ceramic puppies affixed to a railing. “The great thing about Eastport,” says Dick Franyo, a former investment banker who relocated from Baltimore and opened the popular watering hole the Boatyard Bar and Grill, “is that, unlike so many places today, it has a soul.”

That soul is inextricably entwined with boat building. The Annapolis Yacht Yard at Second and Third streets built sub-chasers and PT boats during World War II. In 1947, legendary craftsmen John Trumpy and Sons bought the yard to build luxury wooden yachts, closing down in 1974 after fiberglass came on the scene. The Spa Creek site, now on the National Register of Historic Places, still houses maritime businesses as well as the Chart House restaurant, known for expansive water views and giant slices of mud pie.

Local maritime heritage and its lessons come to vivid life in the old McNasby's oyster packing plant on Back Creek, home of the Annapolis Maritime Museum, which opened in 2002. But a year later, Hurricane Isabel's 65 mph winds and a seven-foot storm surge blew a hole through the building's concrete block walls, rendering the exhibits temporarily homeless. The building is scheduled to reopen in 2006, and its wide pier has been rebuilt. The adjacent Barge House is set to reopen this fall as an interpretive center for the Thomas Point Lighthouse, the Chesapeake Bay's last working screwpile light.

Pat Mahoney, age twenty-five, is part of Eastport's living maritime history. He and his father are the last commercial watermen in Eastport, most of whom have been driven out by soaring real estate prices and expensive docking fees. "Grim," Mahoney replies when asked the outlook for his future as an Eastport-based waterman. It's grueling work, twelve-hour days, but "it's what I love to do," says Mahoney, who started in the business at age eight, bought his own boat in high school, and lives on family property a block from the water. "Every day, Mother Nature brings something different."



Although Annapolis is known as "America's Sailing Capital," Eastport, with three yacht clubs and more than a half dozen marinas, plays a big part in the sailing scene. The Eastport Yacht Club's deck on the water offers one of the best views of the Wednesday Night Races, a fifty-year tradition that attracts a hundred sailing crews whose vessels sprint, heel, tack, and bob toward the finish line.

At the nearby Davis' Pub across from a small waterfront park on Back Creek, boaters can tie up long enough to grab a beer and crab cake sandwich. On a recent Monday night, a picnic table on the pub's patio was full of the "ministers" of the Maritime Republic of Eastport. The MRE is a satirical movement that began seven years ago "over a couple of beers," according to Josh Cohen, a MRE founder and now a city alderman, to promote Eastport businesses and prevent the loss of tourist dollars while the Spa Creek drawbridge was closed for a six-week repair. "Seceding" from Annapolis on Super Bowl Sunday 1998, the republic garnered international attention, raised funds for charity, and had fun along the way. "Eastport Is Revolting," banners declared, while a motley militia fired blank shots over the water with cannons and muskets.



The MRE holds playful events and fundraisers annually, including a springtime .05K Bridge Run for people and dogs. The popular Tug of War (this year slated for October 29), features seven heats of thirty people yanking on a 1,700-foot-long rope across Annapolis Harbor, a competition so fierce that sometimes Eastport has to send reinforcements to the Annapolis side to even things out. The irreverent sense of fun bubbles up at the Burning of the Socks each March on the vernal equinox, when heaps of knit footwear are sacrificed on a bonfire to signal winter's end. And December brings the Boat Parade of Lights, sponsored by the Eastport Yacht Club, when vessels of all shapes and sizes adorn their decks with

twinkling lights.

To trumpet Eastport's maritime heritage, artist Cindy Fletcher-Holden painted a 1,530-square-foot mural of workboats and pleasure craft on the side of an old furniture warehouse on Fourth Street—Eastport's main street until the 1950s, now the focus of a revitalization effort. (In fact, look quick—the building and the mural may be gone soon to make way for new shops, etc.) She creates signs, boat lettering, and fine arts paintings at her studio, Fletcher Art. Twice a year she organizes an exhibit with other Eastport artists in the Annapolis Yacht Club's "shed" at the foot of the Spa Creek bridge. The next Art Between the Creeks is planned for November 11-13.

New to the array of businesses here is Wild Thing, a cute gift and flower shop that complements owner Lisa LoVullo's four-year-old online gift basket service. At Fourth and Chester, the private Peerless Rens Club stands as monument to Eastport's African American heritage. Started in the 1930s as a basketball team of young Eastport men, it evolved into a social club that sponsored trips, balls, parties, and barbecues in its heyday in the 1960s—and is still a hangout for the aging membership.

Despite its blue collar roots, Eastport is home to a host of upscale restaurants, most near the Spa Creek bridge. On the spot where Greek immigrant Sam Lewnes opened an eatery eighty years ago, grandson Charlie established Lewnes Steakhouse, which garnered first place in the 2001 Zagat's listing of regional restaurants. Out-of-towners gravitate to the well-known chain Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, directly across the street. O'Leary's, consistently cited for the best seafood in Annapolis, has new competition in Rockfish, a chic contemporary restaurant whose signature dish is—what else—a whole rockfish. Carrol's Creek is always popular for its water views and cream of crab soup. As for lodging, each of Eastport's four inns has its own charming personality, from the contemporary Inn at Spa Creek to the 1860s Eastport House, adorable Peninsula House with its lovely English garden, and the Inn at Horn Point, a century-old Victorian.

Although Fletcher-Holden's mural is worn and starting to peel, it gives the artwork a sort of tumbledown charm that suits Eastport just fine. "There's a grace in imperfection, and Eastport embraces that," says fellow artist Rosemary Freitas Williams. "Here I find all the kinds of things I like to paint—broken down boats, masts propped on sawhorses, the corner of a garden with flowers and weeds." Despite the popping up of new houses, new businesses, and new coats of paint, an impeccably manicured and blemish-free look is not what this hometown strives for. Just note the yellow MRE flag flying above many Eastport residences; its steadfast motto states it just right: "We Like It This Way."

http://www.chesapeakelifemag.com/index.php/cl/travel_article/ht_eastport/ accessed March 1, 2009

[Take the Eastport Walking Tour](#)



[Virtually!](#)

<http://www.amaritime.org/history.html> Accessed February 7, 2009

Life Aquatic

The sailing world docks in Annapolis

- By Whitney Dangerfield
- Photographs by Whitney Dangerfield
- Smithsonian.com, May 01, 2007

A lone green buoy sways in the Severn River, a couple hundred feet off the Annapolis harbor. Roughly 150 sailboats float near it, ready, on their marks. Then, around 6 p.m., a flag raises, a gun shot sounds, and *go!* With the Chesapeake Bay Bridge providing the backdrop, the boats take off. They sail two miles out into the Bay then race back into the harbor, crisscrossing to avoid docked boats. The town watches as the boats pull to a finish, around 7:30, just past the drawbridge in front of one of the yacht clubs.

This is not a special event, just a regular Wednesday evening in "America's Sailing Capital."

Annapolis and surrounding Anne Arundel County has enjoyed a long association with the water. The area boasts 534 miles of shoreline on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, more than any other county in Maryland. Settlers in the mid-1600s found the shallow harbor—it's only 14-feet deep—and the proximity to the Bay and the Atlantic Ocean an ideal place from which to ship tobacco to London. Because of this convenient location, Maryland's colonial governor Francis Nicholson moved the capital of Maryland in 1694

from St. Mary's City to Anne Arundel Town, an area Nicholson soon renamed Annapolis in honor of Anne, the heir to the British throne.

During the late 1700s, as colonies began shipping more grains than tobacco, boats grew too large to fit in Annapolis's shallow harbor. Baltimore soon emerged as the next big shipping port, leaving Annapolis in search of a new identity.

"In the 1800s and 1900s, the vacuum in the harbor was filled with fishing vessels," says Jeff Holland, director of the Annapolis Maritime Museum. New England fishermen came south to harvest oysters. The shellfish, which eat sediment and algae in the water through an internal filtering system, abounded in the Chesapeake Bay at that time. There were so many oysters, says Holland, that they could filter the entire Bay—all 19 trillion gallons of it—in just 3 days. This made the water clear and pristine. Soon, says Holland, "local watermen picked up on the fact that they had a gold mine." And so did the harbor businesses as they began to cater to the fishermen.

By the mid 1900s, though, over-fishing and pollution led to a decline in the oyster population. "Today, we have a fraction of 1 percent of what we had," says Holland. As the fishing boom waned, the 1938 invention of fiberglass, which revolutionized recreational boating, began to shape the next phase of the Annapolis harbor. People no longer had to pay high prices for hand-made wooden boats; they could buy much cheaper sailboats made from fiberglass molds.

Sailors such as Jerry Wood, who founded the country's oldest and largest sailing school in 1959 in Annapolis and started the first in-water sailing show in 1970 in the area, helped bring attention to the tidewater town. Rick Franke, who started teaching at Wood's Annapolis Sailing School in 1968, now runs the program, which was created to offer adults sailing lessons. "It was a revolutionary idea in those days," says Franke. In 1996, the school allowed children to participate. Now hundreds of kids, some as young as five years old, learn to sail every year. "It's like a floating kindergarten," says Franke of the group they call "Little Sailors." High winds and very few rocks make the Chesapeake Bay an easy sail. The water is "a sailor's dream," says Holland. "It's essentially a big bathtub."

For more veteran sailors, yacht clubs in the area provide some healthy competition. Boat races, or regattas, big and small are scheduled throughout the season, and some of the die-hards even sail during the winter in what the community calls "the frostbite schedule." The regular Wednesday night races, hosted by the Annapolis Yacht Club, started in 1950 and run from May through October. Many locals look on from the harbor, others sail out a bit for a closer look at the action. Last year, the Volvo Ocean Race—an around-the-world competition considered by many to be the ultimate sailing race—stopped in Annapolis for the third time.

Although many sail to Annapolis for the optimal conditions, they stay for the quaint small town and sense of community. The rotunda of the Maryland State House, built in 1789, the oldest state house still in legislative use, is perched atop a small ridge in the center of town. Main Street, a pathway of colonial brick buildings filled with boutiques, ice cream parlors and restaurants serving up such fares as the area's famous crab cakes, slopes down to the city dock. The United States Naval Academy, which makes its home in Annapolis, sits on a rocky shoreline nearby. The school, which was established in 1845 at Fort Severn in Annapolis, left for safer waters in Rhode Island during the Civil War. It returned, though, and rehabilitated the campus, which is now open to the public for a stroll along the water.

The water has also contributed to a whole way of life celebrated by locals. In the last 30 years, groups such as Them Eastport Oyster Boys have created music about the Bay. In nearby Eastport, the Annapolis Maritime Museum honors the work of the watermen and the history of the boat culture. The museum staff includes its director Jeff Holland, who conducts business with his dog at his feet. "I came here on a sailboat and never left," he says. The museum hosts a lecture series and provides outreach programs for local youth. They are currently renovating the old McNasby Oyster Packing House, which once was the place to sell, shuck, pack and ship Chesapeake oysters. By the end of the year, Holland hopes to open the facility to the public.

In 2005, some of the biggest names in sailing chose Annapolis as the home of National Sailing Hall of Fame. With a temporary exhibit now at the city dock, a permanent exhibit will open in the near future. And from May 4-6, Annapolis will host the annual Maryland

Maritime Heritage Festival, an event filled with music and other entertainment, all focused on the area's connection with the water.

Even though these events and museums draw crowds, the locals don't need an excuse to turn their attention to the water. For people like Jennifer Brest, it happens nearly everyday. On a recent day at the town's harbor, Brest's *Woodwind II* swayed to the wind's rhythm. She and her colleagues readied the schooner for a private charter in the afternoon. During the season, the *Woodwind II* sails up to four times a day on cruises open to the public. "People say we are the best part of their vacation every time," says Brest, who enthusiastically showed off pictures of her and her crew with the cast of the movie *Wedding Crashers*. Part of the film was shot on the *Woodwind II*.

Brest's passion for sailing is contagious, and she points out that the sailors in town are very social and close-knit. For example, Rick Franke, the head of the Annapolis Sailing School, often helps with the *Woodwind II* trips. On Thursdays, Brest hosts a local music night on the boat. Who's a frequent performer? Them Eastport Oyster Boys, the band started in part by Jeff Holland of the Annapolis Maritime Museum, along with Kevin Brook. One of their songs sums up the feel of Annapolis nicely: All you need, they sing, is a "good hat, a good dog, and a good boat."

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/annapolis.html> accessed March 1, 2009