

THE VILLAGE NEWS

Volume 18 Number 1

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF CABIN JOHN AND BEYOND

July 1984

T-SHIRT DESIGN WINNERS

Linda France and Cathie Nelson jointly designed the winning entry in the competition for a new Cabin John T-shirt and are sharing the \$100 prize, it has been announced by Betsy Lawrence, President of the Cabin John Citizens Association.

Second prize of \$25 went to Alexis Gelb, age 8. An honorable mention went to Julie Marquardt, age 7.

Both of the two winning shirts will be on sale at \$8 at the Bethesda Co-op, Quick Food Shop, and Glen Echo Pharmacy, as well as at the September 8 Crab Feast. They may also be ordered by calling Barbara Martin at 229-3482.

"ACCESSORY APARTMENT" ORDINANCE TAKES EFFECT

Homeowners in Montgomery County who have or want to have a second complete living unit in their home must now apply for a "special exception" from the County Board of Appeals. The County Council approved the new requirement last December and it is now in effect.

Application forms may be obtained by calling the Board at 279-1226. For help in filling out the form, call the County's Office of Landlord-Tenant Affairs at 251-2572

NEW HOUSING PLANS AROUSE CITIZEN CONCERN

A sudden rush of plans for new housing construction in or near Cabin John caused a special summer meeting of the Cabin John Citizens Association to be held on August 14 to determine community reaction to the proposals.

Preliminary plans for 5 tracts of land have been filed with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission by would-be developers. Study of these plans by the Citizen Association's Land Use Committee, and discussion at the August 14 meeting, produced mixed reactions to the various proposals, some of which were found generally acceptable and others unacceptable.

In letters to the Park and Planning Commission, CJCA President Betsy Lawrence and Land Use Committee Co-Chairmen Bob Wilkoff and Leigh Price made the following points:

1) With respect to the largest of the proposed developments -- 850 lots, a golf course and a wastewater treatment plant -- at Avenel Farm (Persimmon Tree Road and Bradley Blvd.), the Citizens Association expressed approval of the site plan, which mixes sizes of lots and density of housing in a way which "conforms with the character of Cabin John". But concern was expressed about possible wholesale bulldozing of trees and storm water management during construction.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, IS THE BIG DAY!

From 2 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, September 8, the Cabin John annual Crab and Chicken Feast will take place. This biggest community event of the year will be held in the usual place on the west side of Seven Locks Road just off Carver Road.

Tickets are now being sold door to door at \$5 for a 3-crabs-and-vegetables or 1-chicken-and-vegetables dinner and at \$6 for a "Crablover Special" of 6 spicy crabs. Tickets cost \$1 more if bought at the Feast.

In addition soda and beer will be sold, and baked goods will also be on sale.

A number of local politicians are expected to drop by at the event, which will carry on rain or shine. Proceeds go to support several community activities. For information call 229-2018

AN IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARY

The Village News has come of age! We're 18 years old.

The paper is published ten times a year. It's produced by Cabin Johners who contribute their time to write, edit, design and mail it. A free copy goes to every household and business in Cabin John.

To pay the printing and postage bill of about \$200 a month, the paper accepts paid subscriptions from people outside Cabin John at \$5 a year and welcomes display and classified advertising. Our ads have a good reputation for getting results.

Other needed money comes from a share of the proceeds of the annual Crab Feast, from the sale of Cabin John tee-shirts, and from the Cabin John Citizens Association. While the Village News reports fully on Citizens Association activities, its goal is to cover everything going on in our community. So, if you have news about your business, organization or family that you'd like to see in the paper, please send it to P.O. Box 164, Cabin John 20818. Letters to the Editor are also welcome on any topic of community interest.

And if you'd like to volunteer two or three hours a month helping put the paper out, please call Andy Rice at 229-3503. There will be a meeting at his house (6517 80th St.) on Monday, September 10, at 8 p.m. to plan the coming year's issues.

HOUSES FOR SALE

Residents of Cabin John are often asked if they know of houses available in the community. As a convenience, the Village News lists below the houses known to be for sale as of August 23:

* 7501 MacArthur Blvd, Victorian, 3 BR, 2 1/2 BA, \$187,500

* 6509 78th St, contemporary, 3 BR, 2 1/2 BA, \$159,900

* 6508 79th St, Cape Cod, 4 BR, 2 BA, \$113,900

* 6420 83rd Pl, rambler, 3 BR, 1 BA, \$122,500

(Information contributed by Cindy Offterdinger, 897-8048 or 654-3222.)

HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS (Continued from page 1)

tion, and particular concern was noted about the increased traffic along MacArthur Blvd.

2) A proposal to build 27 houses in the northeast quadrant of Seven Locks Road and Tomlinson Ave. raised serious questions about the impact on the environment. The land is steep, and deforestation will cause erosion as well as removing the natural screen around the Cabin John water tower. In addition, many of the proposed lots appear too small to meet the standards of R-90 zoning. The Association asked that an environmental study be made and that the number of lots be reduced to 21 or less.

3) A smaller development for six lots on another part of Tomlinson at Osage Lane (the Wilcoxon property) was not approved because the proposed removal of trees would exacerbate noise pollution by eliminating an already sub-standard sound barrier between the Capital Beltway and the adjacent residential area.

4) Development of three lots on 80th Street was approved with the understanding that Spring Street, a "paper street" shown on County maps but never built, would not be put through.

5) Strong disapproval was expressed for a proposed 12 lot development on 82nd Street between MacArthur Blvd. and Riverside Drive. (The street itself does not now exist and would have to be built.) Not a single one of the lots meets minimum zoning standards and the proposed subdivision would cause major erosion and drainage problems.

Copies of the Association's letters to the planning authorities have been posted at the Bethesda Co-op and the Quick Food Shop. Citizens may also write individual letters or call the Commission at 565-7440. More information is available from Bob Witkoff (229-8536) or Leigh Price (229-1720), the Land Use Committee Co-Chairmen.

The People of Cabin John

SAILING THROUGH LIFE: VERA AND MAC DODDS

By Barbara Martin

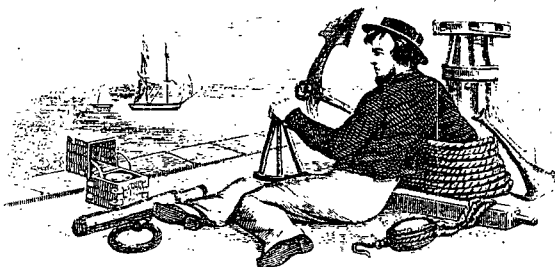
(Editor's Note: The Village News is proud to present again this year "The People of Cabin John", one of the paper's most popular features. Written by Barbara Martin, the series illustrates the wonderful variety of our community which makes Cabin John so unusual and interesting a place to live.)

When Mac Dodds was growing up in Australia, young men were required to serve a term in the military. Mac chose the Navy and acquired a mastery of boats -- a skill and a passion that have lasted all his life. In 1928 he left Australia, a young man out to see the world. After a taste of England he arrived in Canada in 1930.

Inspired by the poetry and adventure tales of W.H. Davies ("Autobiography of a Super Tramp"), Mac used Toronto as a home base from which to explore life. One summer he rode the rods (freight trains) across Canada. Chased out of the train yard by the harness bulls (the railroad police), he and two companions decided to walk the track for 30 miles to the next station. "When night came we slept beside the tracks. The next day we were very nearly killed when a train came round a curve while we were on the trestle. We ran back and just reached the bank barely 10 feet ahead of the engine."

Another summer he shipped as a sailor to China and Japan. Once he worked on a cattle boat with his friend Ray Boulting (director, producer, one-time husband of Hayley Mills).

Most of these adventures took place in the summers. By winter, Mac worked as a staid accountant for a conservative Toronto accounting firm.



Vera had come to Canada from London and was working as an assistant editor for Chatelaine Magazine. There also a young man named Dodds was working in the basement. He asked her for a date and she accepted. Where did they go? Sailing. That did it. "I don't know if I fell for the boat or for him -- rather both together, I suppose."

The Dodds moved to New York where Mac worked for the Australian Trade Commission. "We lived in an exciting and unsavory neighborhood in Greenwich Village. Once there was a murder right outside our door."

Finding a House

When they came to Washington with the British Purchasing Commission, Vera took on the job of finding a house. She saw an advertisement for a place in Great Falls, liked the name, set out driving and got lost, ending up in Cabin John. On Persimmon Tree Road she saw a little house with a hand-lettered FOR RENT sign and a bell in the front yard. That evening she brought Mac out to see her discovery and they signed a lease for \$25 a month plus their promise to put on a new roof.

"It was primitive -- no indoor plumbing. Our water came by way of a pump on the back porch. There was no such thing as diaper service, and when our first daughter was born in 1943, we pumped water into three tubs for all the rinses."

The world was at war. Mac was not then a US citizen, but he read an advertisement (in a sailing magazine) saying that the government needed men who knew small boats. With Vera's agreement, Mac volunteered. He was made captain of a seagoing tug, commanding a mixed US Navy, Army, and civilian crew. And thus he sailed into history as part of the Normandy invasion.

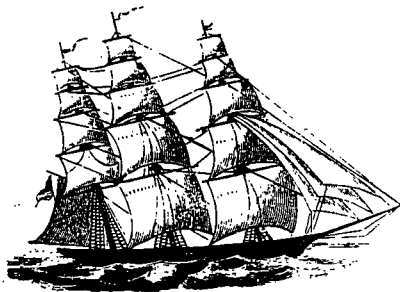
General Omar Bradley had arranged for 12 barges, each of 1,000 ton capacity, to be brought from New York to carry ammunition. Mac's job was to tow two barges to one of the beaches -- Utah -- that had been established by the American forces. "It was fairly dangerous; the waters were heavily mined and any moving ship drew artillery fire."

After his ammunition supplies were delivered, Mac took his boat back to England and began hauling units for the two Allied artificial harbors. It had been decided that instead of attacking the impenetrable ports of Cherbourg and Le Havre, the Allies would build their own artificial harbors. This they did with out-of-service ships and concrete blocks. Unloading from ships to pier-heads began on D-Day + 10.

His next job as tugboat captain was hauling a rail-equipped barge to Cherbourg to transfer US-built railroad cars between ships and the recaptured French railways. Through a prearranged code, Mac was able to let Vera know where he was during this perilous period.

She was working for the Canadian Embassy, then became editor of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's publications. A neighbor, Mrs. Willoughby, took care of her baby daughter during the day. Until November 1945, Captain Mac's tugboat did general towing, including rescue work and disabled ships. When he came home, the Dodds moved from Persimmon Tree Road to 81st Street, where they have lived for 38 years.

Vera stayed with FAO until 1951. Her sister came from England to join their household and help care for the two Dodds girls, the second of whom arrived in 1947. Mac's civilian career spanned stints with UNRRA, a CPA firm, GAO, and the Export-Import Bank. In 1971, he retired.



Travelling by Boat

Since then Vera and Mac have travelled a bit -- mostly by sailboat. There is a favorite island in Canada; they chartered a sailboat last fall to sail around the Greek islands; the year

before, they sailed in the Virgin Islands; and this spring they were sailing in the Florida Keys.

"You know what sailing is, don't you?" says Mac with a twinkle in his eye. "The fine art of getting wet and becoming ill, while slowly going nowhere at great expense."

In the 50s and 60s, the Dodds were very active in Cabin John's community life. In 1956, after the Supreme Court ordered all schools to integrate, Vera chaired the committee to carry this out in Cabin John. Black children were then attending school in a clapboard building near the railroad tracks on River Road where Roy Rogers is now; white children were attending Clara Barton School. Vera arranged for Blacks -- educators, professionals, and other citizens -- to speak to the white parents at a series of meetings, thus preparing the welcome for Black families into Clara Barton. "It was an extremely smooth transition; we had absolutely no problems. Our enrollment was about 300 then, and it included the Bannockburn children."

Clara Barton graduates were then attending Western Junior High. (Pyle had yet to be built.) Mac and Vera recall that "a group of Western parents tried to get the boundaries changed so that their lily-white enrollment wouldn't be affected. But we just showed up at a School Board meeting and indignantly objected. The Board agreed with us that it shouldn't be done, but I'll bet if no white Cabin John parents had stood up to be counted, it might have happened."

The Dodds fondly recall the Mardi Gras celebrations at Clara Barton, where all the children performed dances of many countries, and the parents set up all kinds of booths. "And then there was the Fourth of July parade and celebration that the Volunteer Fire Department sponsored. It was wonderful."

Mac served as president of the Citizens Association in the 50s. During his term, Bogley, the developer, tried to entice Cabin John property owners into selling him their homes and lots. "He told us Cabin John would become a Gol- (Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

den Triangle of commerce and development, and we would all be millionaires."

But Mac and other sensible citizens found many flaws in Bogley's arguments, as well as in his general premise, and led the fight against changing the zoning to light industrial. Bogley's proposal was turned down.

A few years ago, the Dodds built an addition onto their 81st Street house, an addition that includes a huge recreation room. In front of the bay window that overlooks their wooded backyard is a canoe. And in the utility room is another boat. And in the front yard, yet a third. A visitor gets the strong impression that the Dodds are doing exactly what they want to be doing, and have been doing for the past 45 years together -- sailing through life.

Beginning with the next issue, we resume the monthly COMMUNITY CALENDAR of coming events. For a free listing of an activity by your school, club, church or other organization, all you have to do is call Lora Feldbaum at 229-8825. The deadline for the next issue is September 14.

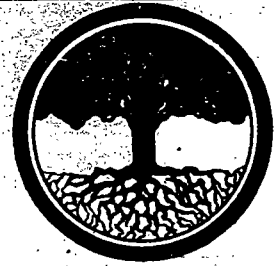
LETTER FROM THE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Our next Citizens Association meeting will come on Tuesday, September 25, at 8 p.m. at the Washington International/Clara Barton School. Here are some of the items we'll be discussing:

- 1) An update on the proposed land developments in Cabin John;
- 2) News about our efforts to get new bus route 32 (MacArthur Boulevard - Wilson Lane - Bethesda Metro) into operation; it now looks as if it would start in January;
- 3) A report plus architectural drawings from the MacArthur Boulevard Improvement Committee;
- 4) A report on the Recreation Center survey and scheduled public hearings in October;
- 5) A request to raise dues to support expenses being generated by the above and other projects confronting the community. (Incidentally, anyone interested in giving a little money to support the effort to close Tomlinson Avenue to through traffic should contact Linda Wichman at 229-3958.)

Hoping to see you on the 25th,

Betsy Lawrence, Ph.D.
President, CJCA



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ANTIQUES SHOW PLANNED

Cabin John's near neighbor, Concord-Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church, at River and Goldsboro Roads, will hold an antiques show and sale on Thursday and Friday, Sept. 20 and 21, from 11 am to 9 pm, and on Saturday, Sept. 22, from 10 am to 4 pm. Luncheon will be served daily.



GLEN ECHO NOTES....

The 14th annual Glen Echo Park Art Show takes place over the Labor Day weekend, each day from noon to six p.m. For information call Diane Leatherman, Park Ranger and Cabin John resident, at 492-6282...

An avant-garde jazz and rock 'n' roll group, "Cool and the Clones," directed by Eric Ziarko of 81st St., will perform at the Park on Sunday, September 9 at 2 p.m....

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CLASSIFIED

(Classified ads should be sent to P.O. Box 164,
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The rate is 50¢ per line.)

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* * * *

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* * * *

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ture about old Cabin John Hotel (Bobbingers').
Call Clara Freeman 229-0444.

* * * *

FOR SALE: Indoor wooden climber and slide, bal-
ance beam, 2 gym mats, 2 school desks, play kit-
chen. Call 229-5224.

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