

THE VILLAGE NEWS

Volume 18, Number 7 *SERVING THE PEOPLE OF CABIN JOHN AND BEYOND*

March 1985

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

(If you want your event listed in this calendar, please call Amy Wilson, 229-8745. The next deadline is April 20. The calendar is open to all community-related groups.)

Sunday, March 24 Folk concert, co-sponsored by Bethesda Co-op and National Park Service, 2:30 p.m. at Glen Echo Park featuring "The Boarding Party" quartet. \$4 admission. Later events in this series include: April 14, Sharon Butler telling stories (\$3.50) and April 21, Jonathan Eberhart, member of "The Boarding Party" going solo with songs and guitar (\$3.50)....Also at Glen Echo Park Gallery, through March, paintings and drawings by Walt Bartman and students on the theme, "In and Around Glen Echo".

Tuesday, March 26, Cabin John Citizens Association meeting, 8 p.m., Clara Barton/International School

Thursday, March 28 Planning Board hearing on Johnson (water tower) Tract, at 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring (call 495-4570 for time)....Other subsequent hearings include: April 18, Hahn lot setback hearing, 100 Maryland Ave., Rockville, 9 a.m., and April 22, zoning reclassification hearing for Seven Locks Estates East (call Steve Lejko, 229-4837, for details).

Wednesday, April 3, Open House at Clara Barton Center, 7425 MacArthur Blvd., 7:30 p.m. about Kindergarten-Age Program.

Monday, April 15, Citizens Association Executive Committee meeting, 8:00 p.m., 7629 Cabin Road

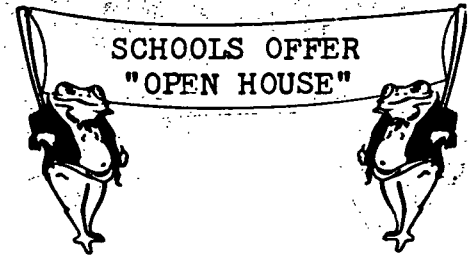
NOTE: The April Citizens Association meeting, normally held April 23, will be held on April 30.

THE FUTURE OF THE FIREHOUSE

Starting soon activity will return to the Cabin John Firehouse. The boards will be coming off the windows and doors. The firehouse will be re-opening this summer as --- an architectural firm!

Elliot Gitlin, a commercial architect from Gaithersburg, has bought the building from a real estate syndicate called Firehouse Associates. Firehouse Associates had bought the building from the county when the Cabin John Fire Department moved to River Road.

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Two schools in our area for young children are both offering an "open house" in the near future.

On March 30, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. the door is open at Bannockburn Cooperative Nursery School in the Bannockburn Community Clubhouse. The school offers varied programs for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds. For information, please call Shelley Shorb at 229-0313.

On April 3 there will be an "open house" at 7:30 p.m. at the Clara Barton Center, 7425 MacArthur Boulevard for people interested in learning more about the Center's Kindergarten-Age Program.

This Program is designed for five-year-olds. Kindergarten-age children with fall birthdays and children developmentally ready for kindergarten who miss the cut-off date for public school especially benefit from the individualized attention and small (14 children) class size of the Center's program. For more information, please call 320-4565.





CURIOUS ABOUT CABIN JOHN?

Where did the name come from? Who were the earliest settlers? What was the grand Cabin John Hotel like? How was the Union Arch Bridge built?

Answers to these and many more questions can be found in two booklets now available through The Village News or the Bethesda Co-op. The books, A Brief History of Cabin John Park, written in 1947, and The Story of Cabin John, a transcript from a 1957 community meeting, are available at \$3 apiece. All proceeds benefit The Village News.

You may send your orders and checks to the Cabin John Village News, P.O. Box 164, Cabin John, MD 20818, or visit the Co-op to get a copy. Supplies are limited!

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LETTER FROM THE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

This month's Cabin John Citizens Association meeting -- on Tuesday, March 26, at 8 p.m. at Clara Barton/International School -- includes on its agenda:

1. Land development issues. Once again these issues are in the forefront with three public hearings scheduled during the next four weeks:
 - a. Johnson (water tower) tract hearing, March 28.
 - b. Hahn lot, 80th Street, rezoning of front setback hearing, April 18.
 - c. Seven Locks Estates East (tract south of Palisades Pool) hearing, April 22
2. Beltway sound diverters. The Citizens Association has filed testimony.
3. Crosswalks on MacArthur Boulevard. These have been vetoed by the county Department of Transportation. We must plan our next course of action.
4. Airplane scatter plan. This plan was voted down by the Council of Governments. Next steps?
5. Taming Little Falls Dam. Congressmen Mike Barnes and Frank Wolf have a plan.

Come and express your views on March 26th.
Betsy Lawrence, Ph.D.
President, CJCA

P.S. Please note that our April meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 30, instead of the normal date of April 23.



ACT III
AEROBICS

Spring Session
 April 15 - June 20
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The People of Cabin John

GROWING UP IN CABIN JOHN:
MAUREEN WILLOUGHBY

By Barbara Martin

Maureen Willoughby is third-generation Cabin John, a distinction she is quietly proud of. When Grandpa Willoughby got a job at the Model Basin in the 30's, he built a house at the corner of Persimmon Tree and Caraway (where Vera Dolezal and her family now live).

Meanwhile her Fenton (maternal) grandparents were living in Massachusetts where Grandpa Fenton was a lawyer and labor organizer. He wrote the first child labor laws for Massachusetts and once had as his assistant George Meany. Mr. Fenton came to Washington to be director of organization for the AFL in 1938, and the Fentons began looking for a place to live where Mr. Fenton could get to work easily but the family could have animals and country quiet. They found it at the end of the streetcar line -- in Cabin John. The Fentons first lived on 76th Street in the house now owned by Susan and Peter Vogt, then bought a house around the corner on MacArthur which they later sold to the Briefs.

Helene Fenton and Ollie Martin "Bunt" Willoughby, each one of five children, met at Little Flower Church -- then located in Glen Echo. Helen had done her nurses training during World War II and was head nurse at Mout Alto Veterans Hospital when she married. Bunt was a stonemason who worked with Mario Segretti (now famous for Mario's Pizza), but deciding that a family man needed the stability of a steady income, he joined the DC Fire Department and stayed with that organization until he retired in 1976.

Maureen is the third of seven children -- three sisters and four brothers. Her earliest memories are of living on Woodrow Place in a sprawling white house in the woods, a house her parents bought in 1953 from a Mr. Meister. "That was before the Parkway was built. My mother took us for walks down 79th Street, through the woods and to the traffic circle

that used to be a public road, but now is the private driveway between Brodsky's and the house that Frances Hall recently sold."

"The days when I was a very young child are in my memory as sunny days, bees droning, hummingbirds, sweet smells of flowers. That was Cabin John to me."

Maureen spent much time with both grandmothers and was strongly influenced by them. Both were enthusiastic flower gardeners and passed on this love to their granddaughter. Grandma Fenton taught her the scientific names of the flowers, while Grandma Willoughby told her the Irish legends of blossoms and trees. "It seems everybody had arbors with climbing roses, and I remember thinking I wanted to be photographed in my wedding dress under a rose arbor, but when the time came there were no more rose arbors."

Roger Tory Peterson, the bird man, lived in Glen Echo in those days, and one grandmother went on the Peterson bird walks every Tuesday. The Willoughby children came to be skilled in bird identification.

Her grandmothers taught her to sew. "I was sewing with a needle and thread before I went to school, and I learned to sew on the machine when I was 11. My grandmothers and my mother made all our clothes except for school uniforms, and they sewed curtains and slipcovers -- everything." Maureen still loves to sew, enjoys fabrics and patterns and creating her own styles. She made the curtains for her house and many of her clothes.

When the Parkway was built, houses on that route were slated for demolition. Maureen's father bought one of these houses and had it moved to his lot, in front of their white house. Several years earlier, Grandpa Fenton had died, and his wife (after taking the European trip they had planned, and meeting with European labor leaders and the Pope) came to live in the white house while the Willoughbys moved into the "new" house. Both houses were served by well water and a septic system. That first homeplace is gone now; three large houses are in construction on the site.

In 1958⁴ there was a big blizzard -- 48" of snow. Maureen was six years old, and when she walked off her back porch she completely disappeared into the snow. "We made tunnels all around the house. Maybe it was a little dangerous, but with seven kids you knew somebody would yell for help if you got caved in on." Another memory of childhood days on Woodrow Place was a time when she got hit in the face by a swing. "My mother sutured me in the kitchen. She did almost all the medical repairs; we seldom went to a hospital or even a doctor's office."

The Willoughbys attended Little Flower School, by then located on Massachusetts Avenue. "Mostly my mother drove us to school but for a few years there was an arrangement with the County, so that the school bus taking kids to Western, the public junior high, also took the Little Flower students. I remember that the last three rows were for the Little Flower kids, then the next five rows were for Blacks, and the front of the bus was for Whites. The schools were integrated but that was just a holdover from the old-time segregated system, I guess."

Maureen's father took the children for walks along the towpath "at different times, but always on Thanksgiving. That was a ritual. He got us all out of the house long enough for my mother to put the finishing touches on the dinner and rest a little before we got back."

During those years the Willoughby children played with the Lynches, the Morgals, the Streams, Gene Wright. "We played softball in the field between our house and the Parkway, or sometimes we played in the Streams' yard. We climbed trees a lot. My brothers were fanatics about tree houses; they built steps, platforms, rooms -- very elaborate tree houses. We weren't supposed to climb trees when my father wasn't home, but we did. When we knew he was due to come home, somebody would be a watchout and we'd scoot down before he got to Woodrow Place."

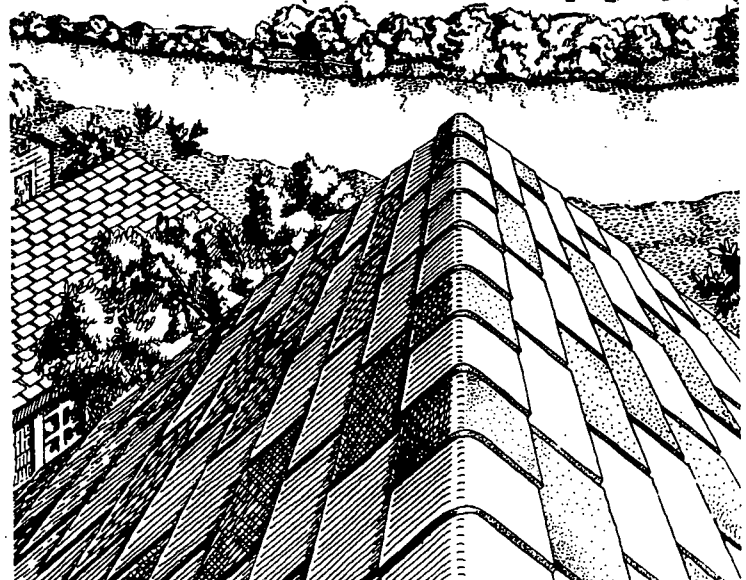
"We were very oriented to the city of Washington. We never shopped malls, always downtown Washington.

We took the streetcar. At that time we had a Washington address: it was Washington 16, later Washington 34. I thought Cabin John was a Washington neighborhood, a part of Washington DC. Until I went to school I didn't know I lived in Maryland. I think our mailing address wasn't Cabin John until I was in high school."

In 1959, when Maureen was in the second grade, the family moved to Persimmon Tree Road, and Maureen had new playmates and a new area to explore. "When my mother went back to nursing part-time, Carol Camplair watched out for us. I loved their place. They had rabbits, geese, goats, horses; it seemed like a farm to me. Cabin John was quite rural then. It wasn't unusual to see people riding horses around the streets."

In the summers Maureen went to the Cabin John Recreation Center. "We did lots of crafts, made pot holders, braided key chains, made baskets from popsicle sticks." Dagny Newman's daughter, Ann Conrad, organized a 4-H Club and Maureen joined. "We learned cooking and embroidery and home crafts. I remember going to the summer camp. It was for 4-H girls from Montgomery and Howard Counties and it was on the Howard County fairgrounds. Camp MoHoCoCa -- it cost \$5 for five days. Lions Club and Rotary Club women would come out to cook for us, and there was swimming. I loved it. We drove there on the newly-opened Route 70S and there was a donkey -- dis-

(Continued on page 5)



(Continued from page 4)
placed from his farm -- who stood in the middle of the highway and brayed at the traffic. We were just barely out of the farm and small town era."

Holidays were important occasions in Cabin John. There was a 4th of July parade for a dozen years, with fire trucks and majorettes. MacArthur Boulevard was closed and the parade progressed from Clara Barton School to Per-simmon Tree Road. Why did they stop having it? "Somebody decided MacArthur was too important an artery to be closed for an hour."

Her family got together on holidays with two other large Catholic families, the Whittakers (who lived at the end of Arden Road where the Guidas now live) and the Churches (who lived in the Gardens in the house now owned by Marie and Bill Keefe).

The Willoughbys had a trailer and went camping every summer. "We camped in 30 states east of Iowa, and several times went to Florida to visit my grandparents. Once we camped in the Great Smokies and another time in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. We almost always had an extra cousin or two; 10 kids was standard. Once we went to New England and just before we started back my mother decided we should all have lobster. It took nearly every cent that was left, so on the trip home we had to eat just whatever groceries there were. We ran out of bread and we were eating peanut butter off paper napkins or our fingers. But my mother said it was important to have lobster in Maine, and we would never forget it."

Other memories from here elementary school days? "It was nice when there were fewer houses. It seems everybody had big yards and flower and vegetable gardens. We went to the Crystal Pool at Glen Echo. And one time the Fire Department burned the Fun House at Glen Echo Park; the whole town sat on the hill by Clara Barton House and watched. I think of Cabin John as a sleepy little town then. When the Model Basin let out, there would be a rush of traffic on MacArthur, "the Mad Herd", but otherwise there weren't many cars. Once we tried to fry an egg on the road surface -- right on MacArthur -- and I don't remember any cars coming by while we were doing it."

Maureen went to Holy Trinity High School. The trip home meant taking the bus from Georgetown to Sibley and then a little DC Transit shuttle that went to the Model Basin. "It rattled so loud you couldn't even talk to the person next to you."

She worked on the cash register at the Good and Quick and on Sears' Teen Board, modelling and selling. With a small scholarship from the Ladies Farm and Garden Society, she started at Catholic University in a French literature curriculum. Three nights a week and on Saturdays she checked groceries at the Safeway.

She took a year out to live in Switzerland with her aunt, taking some classes in cooking and French, touring Europe ("It's cheap when you have a student card") and encountering negative reactions. "Many people thought all Americans were warmongers (this was during the Vietnam con-

flict) or racist, or that American women were tramps. It wasn't the best time to be in Europe."

Back in Cabin John she returned to her studies at Catholic University and to work at Safeway. She began noticing a frequent customer, a tall, bearded man who wore a Park Service uniform. "This was the year of the Bicentennial, and since there were many foreign visitors in town, people were asked to wear buttons saying 'I speak French' or 'I speak German'." When the Park Service man saw her "French" button, he asked her if she could translate something for him. She did, he took her to dinner, and six weeks later Maureen was engaged to David Murphy. They married in August and September Maureen started law school.

One son of Grandfather Fenton, the Massachusetts labor lawyer, went into law; Maureen is the only one of her generation to do so. She is a junior partner in a Rockville firm that specializes in trial work: personal injury, medical malpractice, and criminal law.

She and David live in the house they purchased from her parents in 1978 when the Willoughbys moved to the Eastern Shore. For four years Maureen served as Land Use Chairman for the Cabin John Citizens Association, watching over proposed development of parcels such as the Lemm tract, with a unique combination of legal ability, husbandly support (Park Ranger Murphy is an ardent conservationist), and the love of a lifetime of living in Cabin John.

THE VILLAGE NEWS

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ADVERTISING RATES

Display ads are accepted at the following rates:

Full page	\$40
2/3 page	30
1/2 page	25
1/3 page	15
1/6 page	10
1/12 page	6

CLASSIFIED

(Classified ads should be sent to P.O.Box 164, Cabin John 20818. Next deadline: April 20. The rate is 50¢ per line.)

HERBS and vegetable plants for sale after April 1. Reasonably priced. ROSE TATOO (natural wreaths and herbs) in Cabin John. By appointment 320-2417.

* * * *

GARDEN-CLEANING? If you have plants in your garden that you want to get rid of, please call. I'll come and dig them up. Barbara Martin 229-3482.

* * * *

THE CLARA BARTON Center for Children on MacArthur Boulevard and 75th Street is seeking people interested in working occasionally as substitute teachers. Call 320-4565 for more information.

* * * *

VOGT YARD SALE: We're cleaning out our basement and attic for the first time in 15 years! Antiques, tools, toys, books, furniture, small appliances and tons of great stuff. APRIL 30 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Rain or shine. 6509 76th Street. (leftovers on Sunday).

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Gitlin told The Village News that he plans to leave the facade of the building unchanged. He will even build and install another cornerstone to replace the one destroyed by vandals. The interior space will be completely redesigned, and Mr. Gitlin says he has plans for many creative touches. The Gitlin firm employs about 15 people. It is possible that a construction firm will share the space with Gitlin.

Work on the building should begin by the end of March and will take three or four months.

-- Susan Vogt

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