

# THE VILLAGE NEWS

Volume 29 No. 6

Serving the people of Cabin John and beyond

February 1996

## **Citizens Association Meeting Tuesday, February 27 at 7:30 at the Clara Barton Community Center**

### **ON THE AGENDA**

- A discussion of clean up and repair efforts for the C&O Canal.
- A proposal for plantings along MacArthur Blvd. by the C.J. beautification committee.
- Signs for Cabin John along MacArthur Blvd.  
We hope you will attend.

## **SUMMARY OF CABIN JOHN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION MEETING—1/23/96**

The meeting was called to order with approximately 12 people in attendance. A presentation was given by the Roundhouse Theater Company which provided an overview of their programs, including main stage, children's, and training programs. The representatives emphasized the positive impact that drama has on youth. They also described their Arts Day Program which will run through the summer and have a different guest artist for each two-week session.

**Resubdivision Issue** - The meeting then focused on a proposed resubdivision request for a lot adjacent to 75th Street and MacArthur Boulevard. The proposal as submitted requested resubdivision of the existing single lot into 3 building lots to be sized at 9,000 Sq. Ft., 9675 Sq. Ft., and 11,250 Sq. Ft. The Park and Planning Commission disapproved the original plan, but the Petitioner can request an appeal. The adjoining neighbors to the property have already written to Park and Planning requesting that the resubdivision be limited to two lots, based on the Master Plan for this area and established precedents. A motion to write a letter on behalf of the CJCA supporting the restriction of the resubdivision to two lots was passed.

**Beautification Project Report** - A wildlife consultant has been contacted in order to get suggestions on how project funds can best be spent by the CJCA.

**C & O Canal Towpath** - A Canal towpath effort has been started to restore the damaged sections. Fred Mopsik is the lead for coordinating this effort. He can be reached at 320-2111.

## **OUR CABIN JOHN NEIGHBORS**

### **Interviewing the Interviewer: Barbara Martin**

by Diane Leatherman

For fifteen years, Barbara Martin has been interviewing and writing about other Cabin Johners for *The Village News*. Some informal calculation leads me to conclude that she has spent at least 750 to 1,000 hours of her own time to tell us about our neighbors and friends. So I thought maybe it was time for her own story. Here it is.

Barbara was born, went to school, and grew up in Washington, D.C. Her father was a D.C. policeman and her birth family included a mother, a younger sister and brother.

All of the mothers on her block of rowhouses where she grew up were at-home mothers, not unusual then. On the block there were six girls within a year of her age, with five younger brothers between them. They played such games as "hide-n-seek" together, outside in the evenings. As they grew, the whole gang often took off to explore the world on their bikes in ever widening circles. Barbara's father had a heart attack and retired early when Barbara was in junior high, leaving her parents unable to pay for college. After graduation from Roosevelt High, Barbara went off to the University of Delaware. Her family had a farm on the Eastern Shore and she could attend college there, paying in-state tuition. That, with a scholarship and working in the dining hall, enabled her to get her Bachelors degree in Political Science, with a minor in English, in three years.

Barbara had married while in college. After graduation she came back to Washington and took a job as a secretary with the State Department. That job was boring, but every day she passed Naylor Road Nursery School. That looked like an interesting place to work! So she quit the State Department, took a pay cut to \$45 a week and taught four-year-olds until her first son, Steve, was born.

The two other teachers that she taught with at Naylor Road are still close friends who stay in touch, one in Arizona and the other in Pennsylvania

Steve was followed in 15 months by Mat, and two years later by a daughter, Marian. The family was completed six years later with another boy, Andy, who would eventually

*Continued on page 4*

## Looking Backwards in Cabin John

### Cabin John's Claims to Fame

Most of us who live in Cabin John don't think of it as a particularly famous community, and many others who live elsewhere in the greater Washington area are totally oblivious to us. But, in its own modest way, Cabin John can claim a few moments of fame.

Mystery rather than fame, might be a better way to refer to the abiding question of how our community acquired its unusual name. Two schools of thought predominate: one that it is named for a hermit, known only as "John," who lived in a cabin in the woods; the other that "Cabin" is a corruption of "Captain" and that the name indeed may derive from the English explorer, Captain John Smith, who sailed up the Potomac in 1608 about to where Cabin John stands today. In support of this theory old records, dating back to 1715 refer to our creek as Captain John's Run or Branch.

A minor digression: Speaking of names, it is worth noting that as Cabin John gradually became settled, beginning in the mid-19th century, many streets originally had more interesting names than today's consecutive numbers. 78th Street, for example, used to be known as Halifax Street; 79th Place was Cedar Street, 80th Place was Valley Road, while 81st Street was called Wilson Avenue south of MacArthur and Main Street north of it.

The fame of the Union Arch, when it was built, as the second longest single span in the world, has been noted earlier in this column. Even more famous in its day, was the Cabin John Bridge Hotel which, from 1870 to 1931, occupied the land where Cabin John Gardens now stands. In the next issue, this column will tell more about the hotel (actually, not a hotel since it did not put up overnight guests) which in its heyday, at the turn of the century, boasted a staff of 17 bartenders and 40 waiters. John Philip Sousa led the orchestra in the summer of 1900, and it is alleged that Sousa's "Washington Post" March was first performed here. Another historic claim is that Maryland fried chicken originated at the hotel; certainly the establishment was famed for the dish.

Cabin John had a quarry from 1929 to 1943 - the Bucolston Quarry at the foot of Main Street. If you cross the Calvert Street Bridge in Washington today, you are driving or walking over Bucolston stone.

Vice President Hubert Humphrey's political career had its genesis in Cabin John. True, he was a Minnesotan, but in his early manhood, he made a vacation trip to Washington and stayed with his uncle, Dr. Harry Humphrey who built the so-called "Mud House" on 75th Street in 1925 and lived there for 27 years. While visiting,

young Humphrey took the Cabin John trolley down to the U.S. Capitol and watched the House and Senate sessions from the galleries. In a letter to his fiancée, Muriel, back in Minnesota, he declared that politics was where his future lay.

Another local politician, former County Executive Neal Potter, grew up in Cabin John (the old Potter farm was destroyed when the Beltway was constructed) and in 1928 was a member of the first graduating class at the Cabin John Elementary School (now the Clara Barton Community Center).

*Thanks to Village News Archivist Andy Rice for contributing this feature. If you have photos or mementos of the good old days in Cabin John, the Village News would like to use them with this feature.*

### ANNOUNCING:

#### NOMINATIONS FOR 1996 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS DUE MARCH 24, 1996.

Montgomery Preservation, Inc (MPI) announces the competition for the tenth annual Montgomery County Awards for Historic Preservation. The awards will be announced during Historic Preservation Week at the annual Awards Ceremony and Reception at Strathmore Hall, Rockville, on May 15, 1996.

For further information contact  
Judy Christensen  
301 926 2650

MPI is the County affiliate of the Maryland Historical Trust and is dedicated to preserving the County's architectural heritage. In addition to sponsoring the annual Preservation Week Awards, MPI operates Old House Parts (the architectural salvage depot) in Gaithersburg, and presents occasional lectures and workshops on historic preservation topics.

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**County News**

The Genealogical Club of the Montgomery County Historical Society is holding classes in Genealogical Research starting in March.

Classes include: "Introduction to Genealogy (Basic Course)", "Introduction to African American Genealogical Research", "Advanced Genealogy", "Introduction to the L.D.S. (Mormon) Family History Center", "Organizing Your Genealogical Research" and "A step By Step Guide to Research."

For information call 301-762-1492.

**C & O Canal Towpath**

As you may know much of the 185 miles of the C & O Canal Towpath was damaged due to heavy flooding in January. Estimates for repair have been reported to be more than \$20 million. Congress voted to provide \$2 million, but obviously more will be needed.

The U.S. Park Service has set up a special fund to collect donations from the public for rebuilding the flood damaged towpath. If you would like to make a contribution please make your check out to:

**U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.**

Mail to:

**C& O Canal Path Donation Account  
c/o Superintendent Faris  
P.O. Box 4  
Sharpsburg, MD 21782**

To announce an event in The Village News send a written notice to: Editor, PO Box 164, Cabin John Md 20818. The next deadline and mailing date is published on the inside back page.



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*Barbara Martin continued from page 1*

be in one of the last classes to attend Clara Barton Elementary.

Soon after that Barbara started to attend D.C. Teachers College in the evenings and became certified to teach in the city. She taught sixth grade for one year but found herself coming home from caring for a roomful of children all day, often too exhausted to deal with her own children's needs.

So it was back to secretaryhood at the National Education Association, where she did her own informal research and found out that the best public school system in the metro area was in Montgomery County and the best of the best was Walt Whitman High School. Barbara drove out to Montgomery County to look for an affordable place to live in the Whitman service area and found Cabin John! It was 1970 when the family moved into a home on 79th Street.

Fortunately for Cabin John, which had just won a County grant to develop a community plan, Barbara became Chair of the Land Use Committee and developed and wrote, with some other Cabin Johners, the Town Plan. The hope was that such a grant would encourage citizens to protect their community and natural environment from the wrong kind of development through safeguarding zoning and positive planning, and to initiate wanted services and parks.

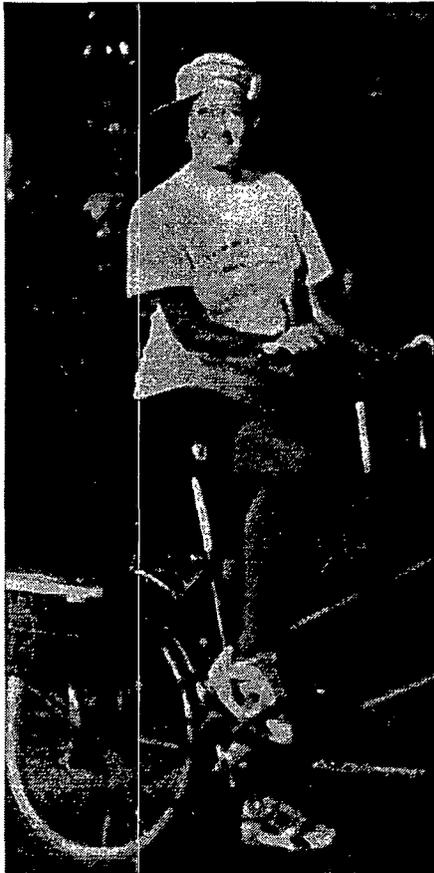
Proof that the Cabin John grant was a success was the incorporation of the Town Plan into the Montgomery County Master Plan and the fact that today Cabin John is a highly desirable place to live. Another result of Barbara's chairmanship is the park off Seven Locks Road, near Palisades Pool.

Several parts of her life came together when Barbara, now divorced, decided to find a career that would provide more income. She decided to become a lawyer. Barbara studied for the LSAT and passed with one of the highest scores. But, at the same time, she was taking classes at Montgomery College in Human Relations and Communication and found these very intriguing.

So, although she was accepted at all five area law schools she decided instead to prepare for a career in adult education and training. George Washington

University was the only school that offered an advanced degree, at that time, in this new field of interest—Human Resources Development. Her chickens came home to roost. The work she had done as Cabin John Land Use Chair provided the demonstration of leadership she needed to enter the program at GWU!

Thus began a very tough year and a half. She finished her Master's degree in 15 months while her older sons—working as bricklayers—helped to support the family. And, when companies and agencies came to GW's Human Resources Department for graduate students to do projects, Barbara volunteered, which resulted in a job offer from Southern Railway.



After she had been with Southern for a couple of years, Wanda Veraska, then also from Cabin John, came to Barbara with an idea. The Department of Education was requesting proposals for grants to develop programs teaching Consumer Education.

"But I don't know anything about Consumer Education," responded Barbara.

"And I don't know anything about training but you do, and I know Consumer Education," answered Wanda. So the two of them put together a proposal that was one of four winning one-year grants out of a field of 65.

Barbara, in spite of caution from family and friends, quit her job and began a new career in training that lasted, ultimately, for 18 years. But that's jumping ahead.

The DOE asked them to continue part-time following the completion of the first grant and Barbara spent the rest of her time that year devoted to developing other contacts that could result in work. "The first year on my own, I made a grand total of \$4,000." But some of those contacts eventually paid off. When a good job is done, that is often the best advertisement. Eventually, Barbara had plenty of work in a field that was stimulating and interesting for her. And at the end of 1995, Barbara retired.

For 17 years, Barbara has been married to Reed Martin, a Smithsonian model-maker. Every month they mail 950 copies of *The Village News*. Reed, by the way, would make another interesting story, but let's not get side-tracked.

What avocational interests does Barbara have? A Methodist since birth, Barbara has always had the church as the center of her social life. She is now a member of

*Barbara Martin continued from previous page*

Bethesda United Methodist, where she sings with the choir and a women's a cappella quartet. She organized and choreographed for the Liturgical Dance Group and still dances with them. She served her church as Chair of the Staff-Parish Committee and writes for the church newsletter.

Her four children have all grown up to marry and have children of their own. Steve is a Doctor of Chiropractic in Gaithersburg and has three children. Mat is a family physician in Philadelphia with two daughters. Her daughter, Holy Kaur (nee Marian), joined the Sikh religion, is the mother of three sons, and is now studying a new field called Intercultural Mediation in order to become part of the Portland, Oregon, court system. And Andy has become the third "Dr. Clark." He is a podiatrist in residency in Toledo, Ohio, and they are expecting their second child this June.

And what is Ms. Martin doing now? "I've got lots of projects underway; I write, I ride my bike on every decent day," Barbara enjoys having a good bicycle and friends with the freedom to ride. She puts her lightweight bike up on a rack on her car and takes off for paths in Maryland, Washington, or Virginia. She and Reed are happily anticipating his retirement in July when they can follow their dreams to music festivals, old car rallies, and exploring the United States.

## Letters

Dear Residents of Cabin John,

As some of you already know, on February 8, 1996, at a public meeting held in Silver Spring, MD, the Planning Board of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission voted unanimously to deny the developer's request to subdivide the property at the corner of 75th Place and MacArthur Boulevard into three new building lots.

This decision, reinforcing the mandate of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan, was realized thanks to the efforts of many Cabin John residents who provided their time, energy and support.

I wish to personally thank everyone who took time from their busy schedules to assist in the preservation of both my property and the unique character of Cabin John that we all share.

Robert C. Wilkoff, NCARB  
Cabin John

## Winter Story

by Alexandra Quinn



Remember the first snow storm? No, not the one when all Montgomery schools got off for less than one inch of snow, the one before that I think. One of those. Well my family had no reasons to venture out of our house and sit in bumper to bumper traffic for anything. So, one night we went over to a neighbor's house to have dinner. There were four families there. The next night, we went to a different house and ate with the same bunch. The next time, one of the grownups said to Mike, "Hey, long time no see!" Mike said "Gee, it's been almost two days now!"

Every day I would look out and see bundles of clothes, with indistinct limbs sticking out of them, waddling down my street, dragging their sleds behind. Me, I went sledging once or twice. Actually, what I *did* do was make snow forts, and watch my Dad try to fix the furnace, which had conveniently shut down.

My dad just loves to shovel. I am *not* making this up. The upside to this: 1) the piles are great to make into snow forts and 2) we get lots of room to get our cars out.

The snowplows didn't come down our street for many days so all the neighbors shovelled it together. No doubt about it, God gave us snow so we could do some neighbor bonding. And hey, when I become old and wrinkled I can tell all my grandkids about the true quality of snow.

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## A FACE LIFT PROPOSAL FOR MACARTHUR BOULEVARD

A first step to improving the appearance of Cabin John's main street will be proposed at this Citizens Association meeting. The proposed improvements along MacArthur Boulevard include planting flowers, shrubs, and trees and putting up Cabin John signs to let everyone know that our boulevard is more than just a fast lane in the daily commute to and from work.

The flowering plants selected to border MacArthur will be hardy types, like day lilies and black-eyed susans, that can withstand droughts, blizzards, and car exhaust fumes and come roaring back in ever greater numbers year after year to give the community enjoyment and a special look. Shrub selections will follow the wise counsel of Al Geiss, naturalist consultant to The Wild Bird Center, who has suggested a variety of shrub types that combine the ingredients of irresistibility and sustenance for Cabin John's bird population, hardiness, and a pleasing and fragrant appearance. The trees proposed are cedars and cypresses to give year round screening off MacArthur Boulevard to certain areas like the new metal fencing surrounding Clara Barton Recreation Center's heating/cooling equipment.

There are two types of signs proposed for the community. The main one would be an attractive wood sign placed on the Clara Barton Recreation Center grounds just opposite the Parkway exit. Smaller and simpler signs with the "Cabin John" name are proposed for MacArthur Blvd. where traffic is known to speed. These smaller signs would remind drivers to slow down and drive carefully through our community.

Application will be made to the KMCB (Keep Montgomery County Beautiful) program for a \$250 grant to augment the \$1,400 allocated to the project from Citizen Association funds. If approved by the citizens at their February meeting, much of the work will be done by volunteers this Spring.

## CABIN JOHN RESIDENT, HUGH GREGORY GALLAGHER IS HONORED

In November Hugh Gregory Gallagher was awarded the \$50,000 Henry B. Betts Award given each year to a person who has made significant contributions to the quality of life of people with disabilities.

As an assistant to Sen. E.L. Bartlett (D-Alaska) 1959-1969 he drafted legislation that stated that all buildings built with federal money should be accessible to all people including the disabled. This bill was passed. He has been instrumental in placing disability rights on the agenda of Congress and therefore into the consciousness of the non-disabled. Because of his efforts many more people with disabilities have been able to get and maintain jobs in the workplace.

In 1995 he published a book titled "By Trust Betrayed: Patients, Physicians and the License to Kill in the Third Reich."

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
THE VILLAGE NEWS IS  
10 AM SATURDAY,  
MARCH 9TH.**

**WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR STORIES AND/OR DRAWINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY. CALL GER OR BARBARA QUINN AT 229 8030**

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**Wednesday Evening:** 7:00 Prayer, Testimonies, Bible questions

**Friday Morning:** 10:00 Community prayer and Bible study

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**THE VILLAGE NEWS** is published monthly except in July and December and is sent free to every household in Cabin John. Others may subscribe for \$5 per year. Send news, advertisements, letters, and subscriptions to:

The Village News  
PO Box 164  
Cabin John, Maryland 20818

The next deadline is 10 AM Saturday March 9 for the issue mailing March 22.

People who make *The Village News* possible:

Barbara and Ger Quinn, Jerry Rhodes, Barbara and Reed Martin  
Contributors: Barbara Martin, Andy Rice, Lori and Harry Rieckelman, Diane Leatherman, Elaine Tama.

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