

THE VILLAGE NEWS

Volume 31 No. 7

Serving the people of Cabin John and beyond

April 1998

NEIGHBORLY NEWS April 1998

by Barbara Martin

Three long-time Cabin John women have died.

Nellie Creamer died in January at age 87. Mrs. Creamer had lived on 83rd Place for 47 years.

Kay Swisher of McKay Circle died this month (March). Kay's husband is Wayne; her daughters are Dana Cable Lupton (also of McKay Circle) and Debbie and Darlene who live in West Virginia. The Swishers have lived in the Gardens for decades, and Kay has cared for many Cabin John children in her home.

Susan Teagle also died this month. Mrs. Teagle lived on Ericsson Road. Her sons, Douglas and Roy, live in the Frederick area.

Fawn and Charles Holifield have moved to Palm Coast, Florida. Daughter **Judy** lives in Florida and daughter Brenda lives in Wheaton.

Tiffany Manion was named to the Dean's List at Elon College in North Carolina.

A treasury of Clara Barton's papers have been found in the attic of a Federal building scheduled for demolition. Rooms in the building were once used by Miss Barton for the Missing Persons Office. Discovered were records tracing 22,000 missing Civil War soldiers. Later Miss Barton founded the Red Cross and headquartered that organization in her Glen Echo home overlooking the Potomac.

Although Christmas is several months past, the Cabin John Volunteer Fire Department thanks those who gave gifts to their annual toy drive. The drive collected 685 new toys, including five bikes.

Bruce Wilmarth needs help in updating the Cabin John Directory. Meanwhile, we have MANY copies of the 1995 edition and would be pleased to deliver one to you, especially if you are a new resident. (It may take months to produce the 1998 edition.) Call for a copy at 301-229-3482.

Also, call the same number with news for this column or mail it to Barbara Martin at 301-229-3482. Your townspeople would like to hear about new babies, new residents, deaths, relocating families, marriages. But I can't put it in the column if I don't know about it. Please take the time to get the word to me.

SECOND ANNUAL CLEANUP OF CABIN JOHN CREEK

April 25th 9:30 a.m. - 12:00

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the MacArthur tennis courts near Union Arch Bridge (one lane bridge). Last year we had a very successful and enjoyable event cleaning up the Creek and its environs. There is still work to be done. As part of Earth Month, the Citizens Association has planned a cleanup of the Creek on Saturday, April 25. Montgomery County Park and Planning has provided gloves, but it's probably best to bring your own gloves (and a pocket knife) if you have them. CJCA will provide trash bags and refreshments. Please wear a pair of shoes that you won't mind getting wet. Kids welcome. Hope to see you there. Please call Burr Gray (301-320-2918) if any questions, or if it's pouring rain.

FOX CHANNEL 5 MORNING NEWS TO FEATURE CABIN JOHN

Fox plans to feature our interesting neighborhood on its morning show, Wednesday morning, March 25th (hopefully around 8:00 a.m.). Andy Rice is providing some historical information to the network. Tune in.

Next CJCA Meeting - 7:30 p.m. March 24, 1998 at the Clara Barton Center:

Agenda: (1) Efforts to Update Cabin John Directory, (2) Status of Montgomery County Anti-mansionization legislation, (3) Looking back at Community Plan created 25 years ago by Cabin John residents, (4) Visit of Fox Channel 5 Morning News to Cabin John on March 25.

Looking Backward in Cabin John

Andrew E. Rice

The Cabin John Community Plan

March 1998 marks the 25th anniversary of the Cabin John Community Plan. The Plan, adopted in town meetings on March 27 and April 4, 1973, was the culmination of a three-year community effort directed at setting the goals and direction of Cabin John's development. Working with the Montgomery County Department of Community Development, the Cabin John Citizens Association took the lead in seeking citizen input on issues affecting the quality of life in Cabin John's future.

During the years 1970-73, working committees were set up to give detailed attention to questions of housing, land use, natural resources, public improvements, and public services (including education, health, day care, library, and recreation). In addition, every household received a questionnaire asking for views on various choices for the future. The records show that during 1972 there were 31 meetings of the Citizens Association and the various committees devoted to shaping the community plan.

The result was a 93-page document which both described the community as it then existed and presented recommendations for the years ahead. At the heart of the Plan was a desire "to preserve the existing life style and heterogeneity."

What has happened to the Plan's many recommendations? In most cases, some action by a unit of government — e.g., the Board of Education or the Parks and Planning Commission — was required to carry out the proposals. It would be a lengthy task to go through them all, but a quick look reveals that some have been implemented, such as the widening of Seven Locks Road, while others, such as keeping Clara Barton open as a school, proved incapable of realization. Still others remain perennial issues, such as the maintenance of MacArthur Boulevard.

Although much of the vacant land which still existed in Cabin John in 1973 has now been developed and the community has grown both in size and in wealth, the general goals of the Community Plan — to maintain an ecologically sound, diverse community, with adequate public services — seem to this observer still to be the desired goals of Cabin John residents nearly a generation later. Today we owe a debt of gratitude to those who helped shape so well the community we enjoy today.

C&O Canal Repair Schedule

On March 12th, Doug Ferris (the National Park Service Superintendent for the C&O Canal) described the repair schedule for the Canal. The desilting (removal of the soil deposited by the floods on the Canal bed) should be completed within the next couple of months and repairs to the Old Anglers Inn section will start on March 23 and be completed in August. The towpath a little ways above Old Anglers (at Billygoat Trail entrance) will be blocked for this period but detours will be available on the other side of the Canal. Parking at the location will be somewhat limited during weekdays while repairs are ongoing. The Park Service plans to rewater the Brookmont to Old Anglers portion of the Canal by the end of June. CJCA representatives, in conjunction with other civic groups, exerted a considerable effort to convince the Park Service of the importance and priority of rewatering the Canal in this area. The Park Service's decision is a direct result of those efforts and we certainly appreciate the Service's recognition of the significance of the Canal to Cabin John residents, among others. Superintendent Ferris also noted the need for repairs of the two paths to the Canal that Cabin John residents routinely use (79th St. and on the other side of the one-lane bridge) and expects to solicit our help for a couple of workdays in the near future.

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At The Clara Barton Center...

The Clara Barton Senior Program meets on Wednesdays from 10: 00 am till 2: 00 pm. Activities include exercise, speakers, trips.
Weight Room. We have 2 new stationary bicycles. Our fees are very reasonable.
The Teen Center meets Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for drop-in and educational tutoring from 3:00 - 6:00 pm.
 Call 229-0010 for information on any of the programs.

At Glen Echo Park...

Hsiang Chang, a senior at Walt Whitman High School will present his most recent paintings at the Yellow Barn Gallery on Saturday, March 21 from 12-7 pm and Sunday, March 22 from 12-5 pm.
Lauren Wolff, a junior at Walt Whitman High School will be presenting recent works in a show at the Yellow Barn Gallery, Glen Echo Park March 28, 12-8 pm and Sunday March 29, 12-6 pm. A reception for the artist will be held on Saturday from 6-8 pm.
 The **Glen Echo Art Glass Consortium** will exhibit new works in fused glass, stained glass, and glass lampworking in the Glen Echo Park Gallery and Bookshop, from April 4-26. Vessels, sculptures, jewelry, and wall hangings will be on display and for sale. A reception with the artists will be held Saturday, April 4 from 3 5 pm in the Old Stone Tower Gallery.



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 All are invited!!

Sunday Evening: 6:00 Why we believe the Jewish Bible, 7:00 Praise, Testimonies, Worship, Singing.

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

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CJCA Minutes

CJCA February 24, 1998
Meeting Minutes

1. Rixey Chapel - Wilson Carter, the new owner of the property, has indicated that the tiny Chapel, which has historical value and is located across MacArthur Blvd from Persimmon Tree Rd, would remain.

2. Potomac Outdoors is the new store that is taking over the former Wild Bird Center location and will be opening the first week in June. Potomac Outdoors is a local corporation that plans to provide outfitting, instruction, and guiding in outdoor activities. Climbing, backcountry skiing, canoe and kayaking gear will be sold and rented, and a bike sales and repair shop will also be part of the store. David Smith (CEO) plans to have four full-time and four part-time employees. Additional landscaping is planned and a total of seventeen parking spaces will exist next to the store.

3. Glen Echo Park - Betsy Plat from the National Campaign to Save Glen Echo Park spoke on the future of Glen Echo Park. She noted that the public comment period was extended to September and that Glen Echo had just received a matching grant from Maryland for renovation of the Spanish Ballroom. The Ballroom is to be used for social dances over the next 15 years. An anonymous donation of \$250,000 has been received for maintenance of the carousel. CJCA approved a motion to send the draft letter (which appeared in the last issue of the Village News) to the Park Service, advocating that the means be found to continue the existing programs and structures at the Park.

4. Cabin John Directory Update - If you have not done so already, please send in the green information form as soon as possible.

5. MacArthur Bike Path - The MD Dept of Transportation, in response to a letter from CJCA, acknowledged the need for maintenance of the bike path and provided an estimate for resurfacing. An effort is being made to address possible renovation, following the current work being done to reline the aqueduct under MacArthur Blvd.

6. Construction at 6425 83rd Place - The hearing regarding the

requested variance and stop work order concerning this case has been postponed to April 22, 1998 at the Board of Appeals for Montgomery County, 100 Maryland Ave., Rockville.

NOTICE
CAAN Annual Meeting

March 26, 1998
7 p.m.
Aurora Highlands Recreation Center
735 South 18th St
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Childcare Needed: M-F, 3 pm. Two children in my home. Experience and references required. 301 320 6226.

To place an ad in the Village News classifieds send us your ad before the first Saturday of the month. The cost is 25 cents per word. If you have questions, call Lorraine Minor at 301 229 3515

The Village News welcomes letters to the editor or to the community, but we will print only signed letters.

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 Friday April 17 for the issue mailing April 24.

People who make the Village News possible:
Barbara and Ger Quinn, Barbara and Reed Martin
Contributors: Burr Gray, Andy Rice, Lorraine Minor and Barbara Martin

VIRGINIA PAYNE: FAMILY MATRIARCH

For Virginia Payne, next year will mark half a century of living in Cabin John. She came here by way of Kimball, Virginia, with short stops along the way.

Virginia's parents had a farm in a community near Luray, at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. "We grew corn, apples, all kinds of vegetables. We ground our own flour and cornmeal. I remember my mother sending me to the store with a dozen eggs to exchange for sugar. I had four brothers and I was the only sister. And so I was quite a tomboy; I wanted to do everything my brothers did. But I also learned how to do everything around the house to help my mother. My brothers worked outside but never wanted to do housework. My dad drove us to Sunday School with a horse and buggy."

When she was 3 years old, there was a severe epidemic of diphtheria. "Many friends and cousins died. I had it but I lived; my mother said that might have been because I was breastfed."

Her father died of consumption at age 44. When her mother remarried, it was to a man who worked in a tannery, making leather. "I went to a one-room schoolhouse; it was just a short way up the hill. We all carried water to school from a neighbor. We had a bucket balanced on a pole, so two of us could help."

A young man named Roger Payne travelled around the countryside doing odd jobs for the farm families. When he came to Virginia's house, he stayed as long as possible. "He told me I was the greatest cook he ever met. He kept coming by and bringing me hair ribbons and other presents. After 3 years of him hanging around, my mother finally said we could get married. I was 16."

The young couple came to Washington when Roger found a job as a mechanic in McDowell's service station on Wisconsin Avenue—a job he held for more than 30 years. "I knew about cleaning and cooking farm style, but I had never seen a vacuum cleaner." They lived in a boarding house on Fessenden Street, then in an apartment on Wisconsin Avenue across from the National Cathedral. Two sons, Roger (called Junior) and Robert (Bobby) doubled the family size.

With Virginia's brother and his wife to share expenses, the Paynes moved to Bethesda, into an apartment on East-West Highway. "We paid \$25 a month rent, and 25 cents a week to use the washing machine. We shopped at the Piggly-Wiggly; you came in with your list and the



Virginia and Roger Payne when they were engaged.

clerks got what you wanted." The next move was to an apartment on River Road, near the Wisconsin Avenue Sears store. Daughter Charlotte was born there. When Roger served his hitch in the Navy during World War II, Virginia took the children back home to Mom.

When Roger returned to civilian life, he and Virginia were ready to buy a home of their own. When a friend of Roger's told him about a little settlement way out in the country, they came to Cabin John and liked what they found. For \$5,000, they bought the house on 83rd Street where Virginia still lives. This was in 1948. "We paid \$52 a year taxes. There were a few houses nearby but mostly it was woods all around. We bought a double lot and I did a little farming, flowers and vegetables, chickens, turkeys, and rabbits." The Paynes' fourth child, Nancy, was born in Cabin John.

They had the only house around with plumbing. The neighbors had outhouses and carried water from a large spring across the street. "Everybody depended on that spring. Some people put rocks around it and planted flowers." At that time, many Washington families came out to Cabin John to camp for the summer. They lived in tents or rough houses. Construction of the Beltway and the Parkway meant the end of these summer camps.

Virginia's year-round neighbors were the Moriarty's, the Coles, the Longs, the Shaws, and the Prathers. "Mr.

Prather worked the roller coaster at Glen Echo and used to give my kids tickets for the ride." Her husband and sons loved to fish in the Potomac and several times a week brought home dinner. "They caught them, but I was the one who cleaned and cooked those fish."

The Payne children and their playmates swam in the Potomac, and skated on the Canal in the winter. "Winters were a lot colder then; every year the ice would freeze several inches thick and everybody skated for weeks. My husband would build a big bonfire so they could skate at night."

Virginia and her family joined the Cabin John Methodist Church. "It was called Shaler Memorial Church then, and Mr. Chandler was the pastor." The children went to Clara Barton Elementary, Leland Junior High and BCC. Walter Johnson Senior High was built by the time Charlotte was ready for high school and Nancy's high school years were at the new Whitman High.

Roger Payne liked to work on old cars. And another of his interests and skills was boat building. "On our front porch, my husband was always working on a boat. As soon as he sold one, he started on another." Although he worked as a mechanic, he was a fine carpenter, "except when I wanted something done in the house."

"There were so many kids in the neighborhood. That's one of the things that made all the neighbors friends. The kids would be in one yard doing their hula hoops, or in somebody's house dancing to the Victrola. There was a vacant field where they all played baseball. My boys served the Times-Herald and the Washington Post."

The whole family loved to go camping farther upriver in the woods. "We took our tents and stayed out there fishing and roaming around. The children loved it." They had friends who lived on the Chesapeake Bay in Deale and Fair Haven, and would often spend a summer week with them.

The Payne girls raised pigeons, and the boys trapped muskrats in the Canal. "Mr. Long was the only one who would eat the meat. The boys dried the hides on boards and sold them." Roger and the boys hunted squirrels, deer, even turtles, and brought them home for Virginia to cook. "I cooked it, but I wouldn't eat it myself."

"We were always having company come out from the city. They'd come to our house and then take off for the towpath or Glen Echo. Then there were young folks from back home; when they graduated from high school, they'd come to Washington to get government jobs. Sometimes they'd stay with us until they got settled."

The Potter farm was just up MacArthur Boulevard. "Buzzy Potter and my husband were friends; they would go places together and usually the boys tagged along. The Potters had a big vegetable garden and we were welcome to take anything we wanted."

The Payne boys and girls were well known around town. Robert was a volunteer fireman for 3 years with the

Cabin John Fire Department. Robert and Nancy were part of the Cabin John Civil Defense group.

Virginia was 46 when her husband died. All the children except Nancy were grown and gone. Over the years her sons and daughters have made Virginia a grandmother (9 times) and a greatgrandmother (6 times). All the clan gathers on 83rd Street for Thanksgiving. "They all say I'm a good cook, and I cook from scratch. I can remember the early Thanksgivings when my husband would bring home a live turkey and of course I was the one who ended up cleaning it."

Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren call her "Ma," although one nephew calls her "Swingin' Aunt Gin," because "I'm always cutting up and having fun."

After Roger died, Virginia did some baby-sitting, and she and her good friend Nellie Creamer ran a nursery at Fourth Presbyterian Church once a week for "Mothers' Morning Out."

Virginia enjoys working in the yard and growing flowers. She reads magazines and every day reads the whole Washington Post. She goes to Wildwood Baptist Church on Old Georgetown Road, riding there with her friend, Mrs. Webb. "We go to the Sunday School and church, and once a month we all go to have lunch at the Mountain Gate in Thurmont." She's a regular at the Clara Barton Senior Center, spending her Wednesdays there and going with that group on mini-trips. "Last week we went to the DAR Constitution Hall."

Virginia estimates that her house is almost 100 years old. She visits neighborhood friends who are ill or frail. "Really, most of the old neighbors have died. I think Isabelle Leizear and I are about the only ones still here." The neighborhood kids love her. "After my kids' generation of children grew up, there weren't any children around. But now it seems there's a whole new crop of them."

Her family members are not too far away. "They're always taking me places, and every summer my daughter and I go to Ocean City for a week." Roger, Jr. and Robert retired from Safeway and now work in small country stores. Roger is in Culpeper, Virginia, and Robert lives in Kearneysville, West Virginia. Charlotte is in Mt. Airy and Nancy is in Odenton, near Annapolis. Both daughters work with special education classes in the public schools. "My children always loved the country; seems it's in their blood to be farmers. Maybe it comes from spending a lot of time on my mother's farm when they were youngsters." Now each of them has some acreage and a garden, horses or chickens or a tractor.

Virginia Payne remembers the old Cabin John fondly but is just as enthusiastic about her life today.

by Barbara Martin



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