

# THE VILLAGE NEWS

Volume 3<sup>4</sup> Issue 1<sup>7</sup>

Serving the people of Cabin John and beyond

Oct. 2000



**Next CJCA Meeting - 7:30 p.m.  
Sept. 26, 2000 at the Clara Barton Com-  
munity Center:**

Agenda - (1) Presentation by Sally Fallon, au-  
thor of "Nourishing Traditions" dealing with  
historical/other aspects of healthy eating, (2)  
discussion of National Park Service proposal  
on Glen Echo Park future, (3) status of various  
ongoing CJCA projects (Historical Exhibit,  
C&O Canal stink issue, Creek improvement,  
etc), (4) reports on Crab Feast and Canoe Trip,  
(5) funding of Village News.

## BE A REPORTER

The Village News is looking for people to cover  
the following areas of community interest:

### Washington Aqueduct div. of the Army Corp of Engineers

\* they are planning another major rehab of  
the water conduit running underneath MacArthur -  
which will probably include the closing of the  
Union Arch bridge for months next year and more  
digging on the bike path- we need someone to keep  
us up to date.

### Community Policing

\* there is a monthly meeting for interested  
citizens and local reps for the Montgomery County  
PD. We are looking for someone who could attend  
and report back

### Mont. Co. Dept of Recreation

\* Oversees parks and the community center,  
determines class offerings. We would like to have  
a reporter contact them periodically for updates.

Call the editor at 301-320-0918 if you are interested in  
reporting on these or any other areas of news for the Ca-  
bin John community..

## NEIGHBORLY NEWS Oct. 2000

*Dear Friends and Neighbors*

*My children and I would like to take this opportuni-  
ty to thank all of those involved with the sending of  
cards of sympathy, flowers and checks to the Cabin.  
John Volunteer Fire Department after the death of  
our wife and mother, Virginia. Many thanks also to  
all who brought the delicious food. We were emo-  
tionally overcome by the outpouring and the gener-  
osity of all. Virginia was a caring person and has so  
many friends. She loved all her flowers and plants  
and cared for them with expert hands. At this time  
it is very lonely and with the help of our neighbors,  
life can continue but with much sadness.*

*Thanks again,*

*Danny Harris, Gail, Wayne, Karen, their spouses  
and children.*

Glen Echo Baptist Church is holding it's 3rd Annual  
Harvest Party and would like to invite everyone in Ca-  
bin John to come and join in on the fun. The party will  
be held on October 21st, 2000 at the Annex, located at  
University & Harvard Sts (same road as post office).  
The evening will begin with a cookout at 4:30. Games  
for the kids will start at 6:00. All kids are encouraged  
to dress as their favorite Bible character or animal. The  
fun will end up with the popular cake walk. Guests  
can drop in at any time. Call Dawn Fyock at 301-229-  
1594 or Pastor Gil Brown at the church 301-229-4430 for  
more information.

Bannockburn Nursery School is holding a 50th Anni-  
versary Celebration. All current and former students  
and families are invited Oct. 21st, 8pm for cocktail buf-  
fet, and Oct. 22nd 3pm for family fun. Call Peggy  
Philleo at 301-320-8635 for more information.

Neighborly News is an abbreviated version this month  
since Barbara Martin is away. If you have items for this  
column, please mail them to Barbara at 6431 79th St,  
for inclusion in a later issue. Leaving telephone mes-  
sages on the answering tape is risky, since it may fill  
up before she returns.

**Community Association Dues** - Please pay your citizen association dues - \$15 for family/individual- by sending a check to the Cabin John Citizens Association, P.O. Box 31, Cabin John, MD 20818. Include the information form on the back page of this newsletter. We have raised the dues slightly for the first time in quite a while and plan to make a push to have the dues notices appear for a few times each fall, rather than throughout the year.

We have seen a slight decline in the number of dues-payers over the past few years and hope that the residents of Cabin John recognize the value of supporting the Community Association, whose primary goal is to preserve the identity and further the interests of the Cabin John community.

The projects undertaken by CJCA include annual community events, support of The Village News, preparation of community directories, and a wide range of other efforts that support the truly unique community of Cabin John. We hope that you will send your contribution/dues in promptly for the coming year (Sept '00 to Aug '01).

Sincerely, Burr Gray - CJCA President

Just a brief word about the Crab and Chicken Feast last Saturday... the weather was lovely, the music lively, and the people lingered!! In other words, it was a great event. Volunteer recognition and a full report will be in next month's *Village News*.

- Nicki Wright



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# LOOKING BACKWARD IN CABIN JOHN

## THE CABIN JOHN BRIDGE HOTEL

By Andrew E. Rice

(During the past several years when I have been writing this column for The Village News, I have referred from time to time to "Time Was: A Cabin John Memory Book." Published by the Citizens Association in 1976, the 84-page book is a collection of interviews with 18 Cabin John old-timers by Elizabeth Kytle.

Since a quarter-century has passed since the book appeared (and soon went out of print), and since practically everyone who came to Cabin John after 1976 has probably never seen it, it occurred to me that it would be good to reprint here parts of some of the interviews. They're simply too interesting to be lost in the archives! Elizabeth Kytle, who now resides in North Carolina, has kindly given her consent to their republication. So, over the next few months, selections will appear in this column.

We begin this month with portions of an interview with Harry and William Bobinger, grandsons of the original proprietors of the famous Cabin John Bridge Hotel.)

William Bobinger: "The hotel was started when they started building the Cabin John Bridge during the Civil War. My grandfather worked on the bridge as a stone mason, and my grandmother started a little eating place for the men.

And that was the nucleus of the hotel, her little eating place."

His brother, Harry Bobinger, adds: "I would say Rosa and Joseph Bobinger came to the States about 1854. He was French; she was German. In the late eighteen fifties he was maitre'd of a fine hotel in Philadelphia, but his trade was stone mason. He left Philadelphia to come down and work on the bridge."

[From this modest beginning, the hotel gradually emerged. By the 1870's it had become a major institution. The Bobingers continue their tale.]

"The lower part, the foundation, of the hotel was granite -- the rathskeller was all granite -- but the main part of the building was wood.... The main dining room was on the first floor; it went straight on back; almost the whole thing was the dining room.... When my grandparents died, my parents took over.... My father had 17 bartenders and 40 waiters. They had a huge banquet table in a huge banquet room....

"The hotel had three bars. There was a barber shop, and games rooms with pool tables and slot machines.....

continued on page 5

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To place an ad in the Village News classifieds, send us your ad and payment of \$0.25 per word by the deadline. If you have questions, call Lorraine Minor at (301) 229-3515

**FENCE PICKETS NEEDED:** about 15 or 20, swized 6 feet x 3 inches, weathered and gray to match and patch ours. 301-229-1106

**WANTED: EXPERIENCED TUTOR** to help 4th grader with basic reading, math and study skills. **Driver** also needed to transport child to and from soccer practice on Tuesday afternoons. Call Michelle or Matt: 301-320-7700 or 202-623-2672

**FOR FREE:** Fig tree (7-8 feet tall) in large ceramic pot; healthy and pruneable. Will deliver. Call David at 301-320-2696 in Cabin John.

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- Pepper cured Virginia bacon and hickory Smoked sausage links
- Pate and seafood spreads
- Canned tuna

*Bakery, Dairy and other:*

- Locally baked fresh Mom's pies
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**LOOKING BACK**

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"My grandparents baked their own bread. They had a huge kitchen under the main part of the building, with great built-in ovens..... They had a wine cellar. In the old days they had some grape vines. There were still a few vines when I was little but I think they had the vines for the fruit. I don't believe that my grandparents ever made much wine if any at all. Because it was vintage wines from France and Germany that they made a big thing of. Fine European wines were the speciality of the house."

Of the hotel's furnishings, Harry Bobinger says, "Everything was beautiful. There were a lot of fine oriental rugs, Chinese and Persian. There was a lot of solid mahogany -- sideboards, china closets, things like that. The dining room tables and chairs were all solid oak. And tall porcelain vases and great potted palms all around....."

"The food was very good, and the hotel was really famous for Maryland fried chicken and Potomac black bass, and these special biscuits that Rosa Bobinger made.....Maryland fried chicken is fried chicken in a white cream sauce, with curled strips of bacon on top.... Down in the creek they had special enclosures where they kept the bass. As they needed the bass, they'd go down and get them out of the creek.....It was some kind of good, because it was not cooked until it was ordered. And then my father had asparagus beds. He grew a lot of vegetables. No canned food ever. All fresh."

(Next month: the grounds of the hotel, with beautiful walks, summerhouses, and the famed "orchestration.")

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The Village News  
PO Box 164  
Cabin John, MD 20818

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People who make the village news possible: Barbara and Reed Martin, Lorraine Minor, Heidi Brown Lewis.

Regular Contributors: Burr Gray, Andy Rice and Barbara Martin.

Ads - 301-229-3515. Neighborly News - 301-229-3482, Features/news - 301-320-0918.

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