

THE VILLAGE NEWS

Volume 35 Issue 2

Serving the people of Cabin John and beyond

Oct 2001

NEIGHBORLY NEWS Oct. 2001

William Ward made his debut on August 11. William lives on Woodrow Place with his parents, Nadja and Bob Ward. Bob runs a commercial recycling company, and Nadja recently retired from managing an Elizabeth Arden salon to be a stay-home mom.

New residents to MacArthur Boulevard are Tom and Gail Davenport and their son, Ryan. Both Tom and Gail work for the International Finance Corporation. The Davenports moved to Cabin John from Foxhall Village.

Richard and Jennifer Samit of 75th Place are the proud parents of Claudia Irene Samit, born June 24. Jennifer is a nurse and Richard is in real estate development.

Reed Martin of 79th Street suffered a broken neck while surfing in the ocean in August. Miraculously, there was no paralysis or permanent damage, and after his surgical collar removal and physical therapy, he will be back in the water, though perhaps a bit more leery of surfing.

Neil Helm is also on the recovery list. Neil followed his dog into the Canal a few weeks ago and broke two ribs on the rocks. (The dog was unhurt.) Neil lives on Riverside Drive.

Ex-Cabin Johner Ann Foley has written a book about her new home, Elliot's Island, a Dorchester County locale well-known to dedicated bird-watchers. Ann lived for 15 years on 83rd Street in the house now owned by the Robert Patch family. Her book, "Elliot's Island: The Land That Time Forgot," is available from Ann at dogwdbooks@shorennet.net.

Isabelle Leizear has moved from her 83rd Place home to Silver Spring. Isabelle came to Cabin John in 1926 when she was 7 years old. Her new address is 3420 Canberra Street, Silver Spring MD 20904, or you can call her at 301-890-5032.

Artist Harriet Lesser's latest exhibit is on display at the Studio Gallery in Georgetown through September 30. Harriet's exhibit features her paintings, drawings, and screens.

In June Ava Henderson was born to parents Janine and Doug Henderson of Froude Circle. Janine is a lobbyist and Doug describes his work as "taking care of Ava and continuing the never-ending remodeling of our house

Next CJCA Meeting - 7:30 p.m. Sept 25, 2001 at the Clara Barton Community

Center: (1) 25 Minute Video of Cabin John Canoe Trip, (2) Results of Crab Feast, (3) Village News Donation, (4) Union Arch Bridge Reopening Festivities, and (5) Plan for updated Cabin John Directory. Please come or call Burr Gray (320-2918 (h), 703-607-2740 (w)) if you are interested in helping with the Bridge Reopening or the Cabin John Directory.

CJCA Dues - To date we have received approximately \$2500 in dues from 155 families/individuals. Our goal is to get one third of Cabin John residents to pay their dues, which means we need about another 80 households to reach our goal. If you don't have the envelope from last month's Village News, please make the check payable to Cabin John Citizens Association, and send to CJCA, P.O. Box 31, Cabin John, MD 20818. Many thanks to those who have sent the envelope in to date. We will have some large expenses associated with the upcoming updating of the Cabin John Directory in particular, so this year we really need receive the dues.

Flags on MacArthur Blvd - Susan Roberts worked with Danny Harris and Margaret Castle to borrow the VFW Flags and have them flying on MacArthur. In addition to seeing these symbols lofted proudly, it is good to remember the core values of our Republic - - -

***"One nation, under God,
indivisible, with liberty
and justice for all."***

We are very interested in the impact that the events at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon had on Cabin John residents. Please let Barbara Martin (229-3482, 6431 79th St.) know if you had family or friends involved.

CABIN JOHN CANOE TRIP SUMMARY

by Burr Gray

The third annual Cabin John aquatic adventure took place on a absolutely beautiful day on August 26th. Our heroes once again started at Old Anglers Inn and took out at Lock 10 (rather than Lock 8 to make it easier to take the canoes up to the parking lot). Dave Smith and his crew from Potomac Outdoors once again provided expert guidance (and rescue where needed). As you know, Potomac Outdoors does this effort at cost as a way to express appreciation for the support of the Cabin John community and our interest in the outdoors.

We started a bit earlier this year (11:00 a.m.) for those folk that wanted some paddling instruction. This provided for a more phased launching of the approximately 45 canoes and kayaks. We had approximately 90 Cabin John residents and friends out on the water when we headed off downstream around noon. The lunch break occurred at Offett Island, and provided a look at some of the facilities that Potomac Outdoors will have available for rent. Dave Smith worked out an arrangement with the owner of the island. So give Dave a call (320-0126) if you want to spend a night in a rustic setting in middle of the Potomac. As always, dessert of watermelon and ice cream was provided by the Citizens Association. The secret on the ice cream is out, so no one is too surprised when we open the coolers and the dry ice fog comes creeping out.

The water level was perfect (about 3.2 on the Potomac Outdoors sign). Perfect that is for some carnage at Yellow Falls (which allegedly was named for the goldish color in the sediment), but with almost everyone making it through Stubblefield Falls unscathed. Some of the footage from the trip will be shown at the Sep 25th CJCA meeting. We made the usual stop at the very pretty Scott Run creek and falls on the Virginia side, giving people a chance to sit in the cooler pools and waterfall of the stream. At the Creek, we had a short presentation by Matt Beres, Community Activities Director for the Potomac Conservancy on the efforts of the Conservancy to preserve the wild nature of the Potomac Gorge. The example of the illegal clear cutting on the Luria property (VA side that was written up in the Post last year) was quite apparent on the way down the river.

We continue to have an awesome turnout, with a combination of old veterans and new participants, including

the following: Missy Cochrane and John Alloway (who were deputized to help with the ice cream and watermelon) and kids, Beno Schmidt & family, Jim McKinna & Missy Bell, Helen Daniel (kayak), Sandy Patch & Simon Mashovisky (demonstrating precarious balancing maneuvers at Yellow Falls, and helping with canoe unloading earlier in the day), Burr Gray (videomeister), Ed Bender & his daughter Kelly, Tom & Kathleen & Charlie & Liam Black, Cabin John Yacht Club Commodore Larry Heflin with daughter and grandchild, Robert Patch, Ger & Barbara Quinn, Tom & Soraya & Tommy & Michael Howard, Bill & Carol Watkins, Allen Alexander & Wayne Little, Nicole Roark and Mary Jo Powell, Roy & Nurit & Tori Seidenstein, John & Leland Fiegel, John & Rachel & Langley King, Elaine Hornauer & Gil Cook, Gwen Brauer and her group, Charles & John Lin, Jay & Delia Jennings with Leah and Mathew, Denise Schmidt and two others, Nick Fobe, Peter Vogt & Pam Zilly, Larry Brown, Don & Jean Hay, Stephen Hay & Alana Hunter, Greg & Daniel & David & Emma Taylor, Gene Juba and his son, Ellery Owens & Paula Shuff, Denise & John Britti and their family, and I'm sure there are others who are not mentioned.

There is really no safe way of getting through the various two whitewater sections other than one canoe at a time, so participants should just plan on having a day on the River. We plan have more paddling instruction next year while folk are awaiting their turn down the rapids. We reached Lock 10 at around 5:30 p.m. We are getting better with certain things, such as a smooth exit for a few at Carderock, which is about 3/4's of the way through the trip.

Looking for a life changing experience?

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Wed, children 6-10yrs at the Annex
(University & Harvard Sts) 7:00pm.

HOME AT LAST: RITCH KEPLER

by Barbara Martin

Ritch Kepler grew up in Buffalo, New York. His parents met during World War II when his father was a foreman for Curtiss Wright, building engines for World War II airplanes, and his mother worked in the company cafeteria, making pies. When the war ended, Ritch's dad became a Greyhound bus driver, and his mom a fulltime homemaker.

"What I remember most about Buffalo were the American Elm trees, the Niagara River and the ethnic neighborhoods—Irish, Polish, Italian. (Although we weren't Italian, we lived in the Italian section; I never quite fitted in.) The elm trees grew to form a cathedral ceiling over all the streets, and in fall this became a sort of byzantine mosaic of color. As a kid, I would ride my bike under this endless canopy of color and always be safe.

"There were no shopping malls yet; neighbors had small family-owned shops. The butcher was a heavy-set Italian man poised with his cleaver in his hand, waving it at the awful kids who threw firecrackers into his vestibule. There was a bakery filling the street with the scent of freshly baked bread, and a corner hardware store with wide planked wooden floors.

"All the houses were large homes built close together around the turn of the century during the boom years of the Erie Canal. All the neighbors knew each other, and most got along well. but there were arguments; I remember some neighbors screaming from one porch to the other, sometimes lapsing into Italian. This working class west side of Buffalo where we lived was pretty tough. I didn't have to wait too long to start getting beat up. There was a more primitive understanding of things there and then:

you got beat up until you learned to fight back—simple as that. I could ride my bike to downtown in 10 minutes and over to the Niagara River in another 10 minutes. That river always frightened me, yet I never could stop visiting it. The Niagara has a mean streak; its dark grey water is deep and swift. I drank my first beer on a pier looking at that river with my cousin, and when I stood up I was so dizzy I nearly fell in. It was my first brush with death.

"In high school I was more interested in sports than academics. I was a quarterback on the football team for 2 years, and I ran track; the 100-yard dash was my specialty. Then in my junior year I got a severe case of pneumonia and missed half a year of school. After that I wasn't strong enough for football or track so I started bowling. And I got very good. In the All-American Youth League, I had one of the highest scores in the country. In that League I won the top place to represent Buffalo, then I was one of four who bowled top scores and represented New York state.

"The National Youth Bowl was held on the World's Fair grounds in 1965; it was televised nationally and announced by such big names as Howard Cosell. And our team won—we were the national champs. At the airport we were greeted by the mayor of Buffalo and TV crews. I was whisked away in a motorcade with sirens and lights flashing to the steps of City Hall where I was presented with the key to the city. I was a local hero, famous in Buffalo in 1965 for 15 seconds. I had thoughts of trying to become a professional bowler and hanging out around bowling alleys the rest of my life. Or, I could go to college. Good sense won out."

Ritch started at the University of Buffalo in a liberal arts program. "I was failing chemistry so I dropped it.

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RITCH KEPLER

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That made me no longer a fulltime student and within a few weeks I was drafted for Vietnam. They trained me to be a medic, and then I went to Ft. Carson, Colorado, for combat helicopter training. In Vietnam, I was in the Air Mobile unit; we set up temporary hospitals and made battlefield rescues from a helicopter."

Ritch served as a medic for 3 years, the last year in a hospital in Germany. He was discharged in 1969, when he was 23. "I had taken some courses in Germany from the University of Maryland extension, so I enrolled at the University in College Park and got a degree in English, with a major in creative writing."

He got his degree in 1973. His mother died that same year. Ritch started on a graduate degree in journalism, and was working part-time in the emergency room at Leland Memorial Hospital, until he got sick and had to stop.

"I hadn't been taking care of myself, not enough sleep, not the right foods, and I got mononucleosis, followed by a broken ankle. Then I nearly died when my spleen ruptured. When I reached the hospital I had no blood pressure and my vital signs were almost flat. I was in the ICU for a month, part of that time on a respirator. It was touch and go as to whether I would live."

"When I got well, I felt I had a second chance at life. Things that before seemed so troubling now were meaningless. I bought an old Porsche and drove across the country with my dog. We wandered around for 3 or 4 months. Then I came back to Maryland and went to work at Leland Memorial as a mental health counselor. I did that for 2 years, until I had to quit; I couldn't stand seeing the patients overmedicated and released, with no attempt to help them solve their problems. I did some carpentry, painted houses, drove a truck, worked as a mailman."

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RITCH KEPLER

continued from page 4

"And then I met Elaine who had just graduated from law school. I was dating a girl who lived in her group house, but pretty soon I was concentrating on Elaine. We were together 5 years, then got married and rented a house in Mount Rainier. By then I was finished being footloose and directionless and was ready for a serious life. I'm not the first guy who has been saved by a good woman."

Earlier Ritch had taken photography classes at Corcoran School of Art, and had dreamed up a project of driving across America on Route 6, an old 2-lane highway that goes from Provincetown in Cape Cod to Bishop, California—taking detailed pictures all along the way. The trip took him 3 months.

"I was proud of those photos and when I got back I wanted to get them framed. But after I found out how much it would cost, I decided I'd better learn how to do framing. I bought some oak flooring and a table saw and little by little became a framer. I found some old advertisements and framed them; then I got a vending license and set up a stall on K Street. It worked and I was making a living. I started getting commissions to have things framed and got some corporate clients. I was invited to the Reagan White house to do picture framing. There I was, Mr Un-Republican, telling them what that picture needed was a silk mat."

Ritch set up a shop in his basement and soon had all the orders he could handle. By now Ritch and Elaine had bought a house in Brentwood in Prince Georges county and were the parents of a son, Max, born in 1985. The K Street stall was given up and Ritch had a booth at the Eastern Market on Capitol Hill—Saturdays only. Most of his work now was done on order.

He took the exam to become certified as a member of the Professional Picture Framers Association. "That gives customers the assurance that I know how to handle their precious photos and artifacts, and have the skill and creativity to do it right."

"I had never wanted to work for anyone but myself, so what I was now doing was a pleasure, and seemed easy compared to other jobs I had worked."

The Keplers' house in Brentwood was an old Victorian which he totally renovated, reading books on plumbing and electrical work and then doing it all himself. He even took the roof off and put on a addition. "We lived there 10 years and it was one project after another." One of the projects was daughter Jane, born in 1988.

As the children reached school age, Elaine and Ritch were looking for a better school system and searched in Montgomery County for the right home. "We found out that the Bannockburn-Pyle-Whitman area had the best schools and we rode around through so many suburban areas that just had no appeal to us. One day we drove down Seven Locks Road and found Cabin John. We loved the bungalows we saw and the place felt like country."

"We found our house on MacArthur Boulevard—for sale by owner. We both wanted the house, but I groaned a mighty groan. Everything needed to be done to it, and the paint was hardly dry on the Brentwood house I had spent 10 years remodeling. But we bought it. That was 1995 and of course I've been redoing it for the last 6 years."

The first project was turning the basement into a studio/workshop. In 1997, Ritch gave up his booth at Eastern Market and now has all the work he can take care of—by commissions from companies, artists, and individuals—and all from word-of-mouth recommendations.

"For 16 years now, I've been building my business, remodeling two houses, and being Mr. Mom. Elaine goes to work, I'm home caring for the kids. Being with my son and daughter has been the greatest experience—and the most exhausting. Parenting is the hardest and most rewarding job you can do in life."

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which has gone on for the 6 years since we bought the house."

New neighbors on Persimmon Tree Road are Kathy and Patrick Flanagan. The Flanagans have two adult daughters, one in college. Patrick's field is human resources, and Kathy is an interior designer.

This summer, Bryan Kirk won a bronze medal in the 2001 World Freestyle Championship held in Spain. His parents are Jeffrey and Donna Kirk of Froude Circle.

Now living and working in London is Tiffany Manion, daughter of Karen and Tom Manion of Caraway Street. Tiffany graduated in May from Elon College, earning a BS degree in Business Administration.

New to 75th Place are Clive and Helen Harris, and their children William 6, Alex 4, and Eleanor 2. Clive is with World Bank. At one time the Harrises lived in Brookmont, but, have recently come from living 4 years in India.

Judie and Fred Mopsik contributed this vignette. "One of the pleasures of living in Cabin John is walking the dogs late at night along MacArthur Boulevard. Aside from the quiet, there is an occasional reminder of how unique we are. There are still many people who find themselves here and then cannot figure out where they are and how to get where they want to be. Typically, we see it in the way they are driving, which often ends when they make a U-turn and ask us how to get to their destination. "There have been over the years requests for such destinations as Sibley Hospital, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Adelphi, College Park, Georgetown, or the nearest open gas station. Last week had to be the ultimate request. A van filled with passengers and followed by another, pulled up alongside us and asked how to get to I-95 South. We told them how and asked where they were, as sometimes that can be of help. The answer came back--Orlando."

Want some Black-eyed Susans, Maryland's state flower? This is a good time to transplant them for blooming next year. Orange daylilies are also available. Call me at 301-229-3482 to arrange "dig and carry."

Call Barbara Martin (301-229-3482) with news about neighbors old and new. Births, deaths, marriages, people moving in or out of Cabin John--let me know so we can spread the word.

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RITCH KEPLER

continued from page 4

In the 6 years the Keplers have been in Cabin John, Ritch has become a major contributor to the town. In the Adopt A Road program, his beat is MacArthur from Persimmon Tree to Wilson Lane. "If I'm driving and see some trash, I stop and pick it up. And whenever I go jogging I carry a bag."

With Ger Quinn and Peter Vogt, Ritch created the six panels in the Post Office that tell the story of Cabin John. He is the "finishing artist" for the panels being made by the History Committee, on display at the Crab Feast and slated to be hung permanently in the Clara Barton Community Building. And he will bring his talent and effort to the proposed outdoor display that will be installed by the Union Arch Bridge.

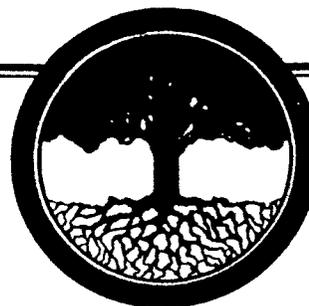
Max is in Whitman now and Jane is at Pyle. The Keplers love the outdoors and their family activities center around biking, hiking, canoeing, and camping. They have backpacked and camped along the entire length of the Canal towpath and have done wilderness camping in the Adirondacks.

Former quarterback, runner, and bowler Kepler now lends his athletic talents to baseball. As a member of the star team, the Cabin John Crushers, he and his teammates this year won the entire area championship in the Ponce deLeon League, an elite group only open to those mature gentlemen who are at least 48.

"I hadn't played much baseball, but in a leap of faith, my friend and neighbor Harry Rieckelman persuaded me to join the team. I usually play right field and sometimes they let me play second base."

The man who once planned to be a professional writer is a thoughtful guy who has kept a journal for the last 25 years. "When I see my healthy, happy kids playing in the yard, or when I see my senior citizen neighbor hauling stones in his wheelbarrow all day, I am so moved that I need to write about it. Sometimes it's prose, sometimes poetry--not to be published but just because I enjoy it."

"There's never a day that I don't think about how blessed I am; I have a wonderful wife, great kids, good health, work that I love, and a neighborhood that couldn't be better. My Cabin John neighbors are good friends that I expect to keep all my life. I can grow old here, well. As soon as we moved here, I knew I was "home," as I had not been in any place since my boyhood. What a rich, eclectic surfeit of people who are unfailingly interesting and more important--good, helpful, and dear friends. I love this town."



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SNATCHED FROM BENEATH THE BULLDOZER'S TREADS

By Danny Harris

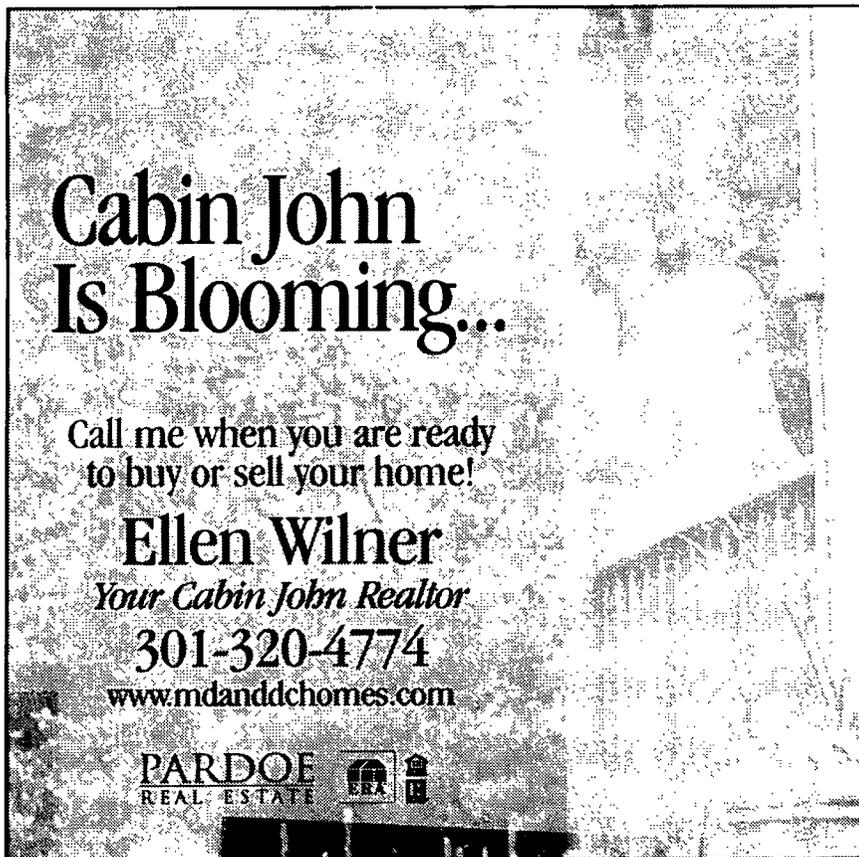
For 15 years I have been involved in recycling appliances and material from homes that are being renovated or torn down. These salvaged materials are donated through the Interfaith Consortium to upgrade homes in depressed areas. Items recycled include furnaces, appliances, cabinets, bathroom fixtures, doors, trim, windows, lumber and bricks. Copper pipe and downspouts and aluminum siding are sold for funds to transport the materials.

Recycling these materials is labor intensive and often I am given only a few days notice before the demolition crews arrive. If we can't remove them in time, these reusable materials end up in our land fills – and no one gets any benefit from them.

It must be as sad to you as it is to me to see well-built 50 year-old homes that have been well kept up being demolished to build bigger, more stylish homes. This is being done in Montgomery County more and more. Wood paneling, joists, rafters, flooring, doors, appliances, bathroom fixtures and windows are crushed under the weight of a front-end loader and splintered into rubbish.

What a waste! COULD YOU SPARE A COUPLE OF HOURS NOW AND THEN? If there is a possibility that you might be able to help, please call me at 301-229-7982.

It would be great to have a list of possible workers. Please give it some consideration; your help would do so much good.



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September 1, 2000 to August 31, 2001

Beginning Checkbook Balance (9/1/00).....\$ 884.88

INCOME

Display Advertising	\$5,026.50
Classified Advertising	168.75
Neighborhood Services	520.50
Donations	2,000.00
Subscriptions	155.00

Total	\$7,870.75

EXPENSES

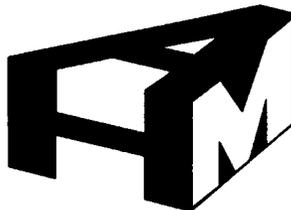
Printing Expense	\$6,580.35
Mailing Expenses:	
Monthly Mailing	1,000.93
Bulkrate Fee	125.00
Labels	212.63
Special Mailing	95.64
Misc.	34.00
PO Box Rental	44.00

Total	\$8,092.55

TOTAL OF INCOME MINUS EXPENSES.....\$ -221.80

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Submitted by:
Lorraine Minor
Business Manager, CJVN
14 September 2001



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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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