

# THE VILLAGE NEWS

Volume 37 Issue 4

Serving the people of Cabin John and beyond

Dec. 2003

## HOLIDAY CAROLING IN CABIN JOHN Sunday December 21st, 7pm.

Have you ever wanted to participate in the old-fashioned custom of spreading holiday cheer through song? Or do you enjoy singing holiday carols but your family frowns on your belting them out solo? The Cabin John Choral Arts Club invites family, friends and neighbors to join us on Sunday, December 21 for a fun-filled evening of caroling door to door! We'll meet at the Cabin John Community Center at 7pm and go walking and singing around the neighborhood from there. Refreshments following. Bundle up and bring flashlights! All ages welcome and sing as loud as you want! Please contact Denise Britti at [denise.britti@verizon.net](mailto:denise.britti@verizon.net) or 301-263-0511 if you have any questions.

The Cabin John Choral Arts club will also be performing at the Cabin John Holiday party on Dec. 14th. We'll see you there.

## Annual Cabin John Holiday Party

**Sunday December 14th 4:30 - 6:30.** See flyer enclosed.

We need volunteers to Run the December 14th Cabin John Holiday Party. Please contact Burr Gray ((703-607-2740 (w) [burr.gray@alum.dartmouth.org](mailto:burr.gray@alum.dartmouth.org))) if you can help with one of the following things: Decorations/setup, food pickup/setup, table & chairs setup, popcorn, kids crafts, Santa's gifts to kids, contacting local merchants to get raffle items, Christmas tree pickup/setup, and Cleanup.

Once again we will be collecting children's clothes and toys in good condition for the Children's Law Center, and new this year we'll also be collecting unopened hotel toiletries. see page 2 for more details.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- |     |                                                    |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------|
| Nov |                                                    |
| 25  | CJCA meeting 7:30pm, Clara Barton Community Center |
| Dec |                                                    |
| 14  | Holiday Party 4:30pm, Community Center             |
| 21  | Caroling with the Choral Arts Club 7pm             |

## Neighborly News December 2003 by Barbara Martin

**The Reverend Mrs. Juanitta Williams** of Carver Road died in October at the venerable age of 102. At a very early age, Mrs. Williams was part of a vaudeville troupe. In 1933, she married Professor Edward Williams and came to Washington. They moved to Cabin John, and Mrs. Williams became a certified minister. She was a County nurse for several years. Mrs. Williams was a strong force in the Cabin John community, helping to organize the original Crab Feast. For the residents of Carver Road, the lady they called "Ma" is fondly remembered.

New neighbors on 83rd Place are **Carolyn Projansky**, husband **Matt Glasser**, their son **Adam**, and daughter **Mira**. Matt works on local government issues for the World Bank; Carolyn is an independent documentary filmmaker. Both children are at Bannockburn, Adam in third grade, and Mira in first grade. The Glassers have been living in Pretoria, South Africa for the past 3 years. Before that they lived in Chevy Chase.

More new neighbors are **Randolph Capps** and **Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew**. They are newlyweds and bought a house on Carver Road in September, moving to Cabin John from Macarthur Boulevard in the city. Both are demographers. Randy does research on immigration; Jacinta does research on children.

Our thanks to **Matt Berres** and friends from the Potomac Conservancy for the rain garden they have started at the shopping center. This is an area of plantings which uses runoff water from the parking lot that, during a heavy rain, slows the rush of water down the hill. The Conservancy plans to widen and enlarge the garden in the spring.

The Cabin John white deer has been spotted along the Clara Barton Parkway and also in back of **Danny Harris's** yard. In other years he has been seen in the woods between the canal and the river.

Another wildlife spotting: **Betty Johnson's** roof seems to be a favorite roosting place for a family of buzzards—Ma, Pa, and Baby. Evidently they have their nest nearby and come to Betty's roof for frequent sunnings.

\*\*\*\*

Please pass on items about present or past CJ residents to me at 301-229-3482 or e-mail me: [barbmartin@comcast.net](mailto:barbmartin@comcast.net). If you e-mail, please leave your telephone number.

## The next meeting of the CJCA will be Nov 25th, 7:30pm at the Clara Barton Center.

Agenda - (1) Final discussion/presentation of changes to Captain's Market expansion and County's position, (2) status of ongoing federal review of local aircraft noise, (3) proposed format/info on CJ Home Page, and (4) Dec 14th Holiday Party plans/volunteers.

## CJCA News

Formation of Friends of Clara Barton Community Center - We are still looking for folk who are interested in being part of a group with the specific purpose of supporting our local Clara Barton Community Center. Please contact Burr Gray ([burr.gray@alum.dartmouth.org](mailto:burr.gray@alum.dartmouth.org), 703-607-2740 (w)) if you are interested in being part of this group.

Final Call for Cabin John Citizen Association Dues - If you haven't yet sent in your dues for the 03-04 fiscal year, please do so soon. This will be our last reminder for the 03-04 fiscal year. The dues are \$15/person or family and can be sent to the Cabin John Citizens Association, P.O. Box 31, Cabin John, MD 20818. Remember that these dues, as well as gifts to CJCA, are not tax deductible.

Summary of CJCA Meeting Minutes from last two meetings:

Sept. 23, 2003 CJCA Meeting

Rain Garden Presentation - Matt Berres of the Potomac Conservancy gave a presentation on so-called rain gardens. Rain gardens capture rainwater from roofs and other hard or paved surfaces and allow the rainwater to permeate into the soil, recharging ground water supply and filtering out pollutants. They also provide attractive low-maintenance native landscaping alternatives that have positive wildlife benefits. (With a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and manpower from the Potomac Conservancy, a small rain garden was created in the MacArthur Plaza Shopping Center about one month ago that will be more apparent in the spring when the plants blossom) For more information about rain gardens, you can contact [www.rainscapes.org](http://www.rainscapes.org) <<http://www.rainscapes.org/>> .

- Captain's Market expansion discussion - there was a discussion of the impact and zoning issues related to the expansion of the Captain's Market on MacArthur Blvd. The attendees voted to send a letter to the County requesting that it answer expeditiously the zoning questions posed in the letter from Elliott Gitlin (architect working in the old Firehouse) to the County dated Sept. 10, 2003, and whether a variance or other type of public hearing is or should have been required. CJCA did send such a letter to the County on Sept 29, 2003 and met with County permitting personnel on October 9, 2003. County person-

nel indicated verbally that they believed the permit issued was consistent with zoning requirements.

Oct 28, 2003 CJCA Meeting

- Sewer Stink - DC WASA made a presentation on the status of the program to eliminate the smell that comes from the Potomac Interceptor Sewer located along the C&O Canal. DC WASA program manager John Trypus presented the past history of the effort as well as the current status. DC WASA expects the capping of certain vents, the installation of certain in-take only vents, and the installation of 4-5 filter units along the stretch from Old Anglers Inn to Georgetown (and buildings to house those filters) to be completed by summer 2005. They did not want to cap the vents in the Cabin John area in advance of the schedule due to legal and technological reasons.

- Captain's Market - Representatives of the owners of the property on which the Captain's Market is located made a presentation of the plan for the addition that is being constructed. They indicated that one half of the new building will be a dry cleaner pickup/drop-off location, while the other half is likely to be a florist shop. The attendees determined to await the written response from the County prior to deciding whether to make any sort of an appeal. (In response to community concerns, the owners indicated subsequent to the meeting that there will be less parking in the back of the new building than originally contemplated, with most of the business traffic being directed to park in the spots along MacArthur Blvd.)

### Christmas Party Charitable activities;

Oona Stieglitz is organizing an effort to collect unopened hotel toiletries (shampoos, sewing kits, etc) for distribution to homeless and women's shelters. Surely the well-traveled Cabin John community has many of these items cluttering their cabinets. Bring some of these to the Holiday Party and put them in the decorated box that Oona will leave inside the large hall at the Community Center.

Children's Law Center - We will also continue with the effort that Maria Whiteaker started last year of collecting clothing/toy/food to help the Children's Law Center ([www.childrenslawcenter.org](http://www.childrenslawcenter.org)) in D.C. The Children's Law Center is a nonprofit organization that provides free legal services to children, their families, and foster and kinship caregivers in the District of Columbia. They are looking for new or gently used winter clothes, toys & games, and non-perishable food items. So please bring something to help that effort. The Children's Law Center was very appreciative of Cabin John's help last year and we hope to repeat the success.

*Burr Gray*

## LOOKING BACKWARD IN CABIN JOHN

What The Old-Timers Remember

By Andrew E. Rice

People sometimes ask me if there's a book about Cabin John. Not really, I say, although there are bits and pieces of Cabin John lore in several volumes. But then I correct myself, because in fact there is a book. It was published by the Citizens Association 27 years ago as part of our community celebration of America's bicentennial and it is titled "Time Was: A Cabin John Memory Book." Edited by Elizabeth Kytle, then a resident on 81st Street, it consisted of transcriptions of her interviews with 18 of our town's oldest inhabitants at that time.

Anyone who was living in Cabin John in 1976 is likely to own a copy of "Time Was", but otherwise it's no longer available except in libraries. Some people have suggested that reprinting it might be a good idea, so that a new generation of Cabin John residents might enjoy the first-hand accounts of what it was like to live in our town during the first several decades of the 20th century.

To give a bit of the flavor of the book, I've selected a few brief extracts from some of the interviews:

Mrs. Matilda Bowles was 91 when she told Elizabeth Kytle: "I worked in the Cabin John Bridge Hotel for many a year...I used to do the laundry, carry it up to the hotel -- roll it up there in a wheelbarrow -- and put all the clothes away...The little girls used to do the handkerchiefs. I did shirts and things like that, the fancy clothes...The Bobinger men [the Bobingers were the hotel's owners] used to have beautiful shirts."

Born in 1905, Donald Touhey [of the Touhey family that owned the store/ tavern where our shopping center now stands] recalled: "The first gasoline to come around Cabin John when I was a kid, my grandfather got a 50-gallon drum and ... set it up in a little shed ... We had a spigot in the 50-gallon drum and he'd keep a gallon measuring cup there; and you'd come by and want gas, and you'd go out there and draw it and measure it and take the can around front and dump the gasoline in your tank. I think it was five cents a gallon."

Ralph Springman remembered the trolley line that came out to Cabin John along the river. "It was elevated, and you could look out and see the river and the canal...and years ago, of course, you could see the canal boats going up and down the canal...It was beautiful!...There was a funny thing about the streetcars; you could tell when one had reached the end of the line. For some reason, your lights would dim. We used to see our lights dim and we'd say, 'Well, the streetcar's at the circle.' People used to come out to Cabin John just for the streetcar ride."

Not long after she was married in 1912, Mrs. Isabelle Redden moved to Cabin John. "It was my husband," she said, "who got electric lights in Cabin John. When we first moved here, we were using kerosene lamps. He went down to the electric company and they told him that if he got, I think it was 15, signers as proposed customers, they'd put electricity in for us. You know, there weren't many people around here then, and, I mean to tell you, it wasn't easy for him to get the 15 signers. But he did. Three of them didn't have the money, and Mother and my husband paid their way and later were paid back."

Our community owes a debt of gratitude to Elizabeth Kytle for preserving these voices from a time no longer in the memory of those who live here today.

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECYCLING UPDATES

### CURBSIDE SCRAP METAL COLLECTION

Did you know that you can put your large scrap metal items out for curbside pick up at no additional charge? Call 240-777-6410 no later than 9:30am the business day BEFORE your scheduled collection day. Some examples of scrap metal items are appliances, bikes, metal doors, sheds, chairs, railings, swing sets and aluminum lawn chairs.

### FREE COMPOST BINS

County residents can pick up free compost bins at the Solid Waste Transfer Station - 16101 Frederick Rd, or at the Bethesda Chevy Chase regional services center at 4805 Edgemoor Ln in Bethesda.

THE NEXT HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE collection will be Dec 7th at the Shady Grove Transfer station from 10 - 12

### PLASTIC RECYCLING REMINDER

Put in your blue recycling bin:

- \* All clear and plastic bottles with necks of all resin numbers; all numbers are accepted.
- \* Labels and the little rings around the neck from the lid/cap are ok.
- \* No lids or caps, please.

SORRY - No other plastics

\* Examples: yogurt containers, margarine tubs, pint-sized baskets for fruit, beverage cups, salad bar containers, flower pots

\* No bottles from hazardous products - Examples: automotive and garden products

For more info, to request a blue bin, or anything else - [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/recycling](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/recycling) or call 240-777-6445

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## PHIL AMORUSO: THE LANDSCAPE OF HIS LIFE

by Barbara Martin

For a man who spent 31 years in administration with the National Institutes of Health, Phil Amoruso's second career is a total turnaround. As many appreciative Cabin John residents know, Phil now runs a landscape and lawn business with his sons that keeps him outside from spring to fall. How did he travel that route?

Phil was born in Wilmington, Delaware, of Italian parents. His father was from a small village, Ripabottoni, in the Apennine Mountains of central Italy. Born in 1904, he came to the United States at age 16, settled in Philadelphia with an aunt, and found work as a shoe repairer, a trade he had learned from his own shoemaker father. After moving to Wilmington, he bought a shoe repair business when he was 25 and kept it until 1992, retiring at 88. For many years he helped to support his family in Italy. Phil's mother was from an Italian family of nine children. She was born and raised in South Philadelphia and lived there until she married Phil's father and moved to Wilmington.

"My parents wanted my brother and me to be completely Americanized, so they never spoke Italian around us, except when they didn't want us to know what they were saying. I didn't learn Italian until I studied it in college." As did many immigrant families, they felt that speaking only English would be an advantage to their children. "My parents constantly told my brother (who is 8 years older than I am) that the two of us should always remain close and help each other. That sunk in, because I have been following in his footsteps all my life. We are very close and lucky to have one another."

"We lived in a row house in the city. There were blocks and blocks of row houses, and dozens of kids in the neighborhood. My brother and I went to public school, but we spent many hours in the schoolyard of the Catholic school right across the street. We played stickball and basketball; sports were a big part of my life. I really loved basketball. Our high school team won the Conference championship, and I made 1st team All-State in my senior year. Basketball continues to be a part of my life as I have coached my sons' teams in the Montgomery County recreation leagues for the last 14 years."

"We had aunts, uncles, and cousins in Philadelphia, and every Sunday we drove up from Wilmington for a big family dinner. I got tired of it, but it was the family thing. However, at Christmas it was wonderful because my brother and I were the only nephews for many years, and our aunts and uncles showered us with gifts. As a kid, I liked to hunt and fish; there were plenty of woods and streams near Wilmington."

Phil started at the University of Delaware in biology, then

switched to take his degree in political science. During the summers he worked for the city of Wilmington as a life-guard and playground instructor. By the time he graduated, his brother had located in Washington working for the Federal Government and encouraged Phil to take the Federal examinations.

As a result, he went to work at NIH, first in the personnel department at the National Institute of Dental Research, then switching to an administrative career development program at the National Cancer Institute. He worked in administration and budget, and subsequently advanced to progressively more responsible positions. In 1979 he became the Executive Officer for the National Library of Medicine and 2 years later he was selected to be the Associate Director for Administrative Management at the National Cancer Institute, a position he served in for 17 years, until he retired in 1998.

"Our work was in support of medical research. It was an exciting time. The Cancer Institute was growing rapidly, and the scientists and administrative staff were enthusiastic. We all felt we were making a real contribution. NIH and its mission have always been appreciated and respected. People come from all over the world to work there, and to be treated in its programs."

While working full-time at NIH, Phil earned a Masters degree in public administration from American University in 1969. During the Vietnam War years, he was in the Army Reserve, and spent 5 months active duty at Ft. Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis, working in payroll.

One night at a friend's party in 1968, he met a girl from Wilmington, Clare Weeks. "We found we had been at the University of Delaware at the same time, but hadn't known each other. We dated for about 4 months; it was pretty low-key. Then Clare moved to San Francisco and we didn't keep in touch. But about 2 years later, I ran into her again by chance. I didn't even know she had moved back to the area. And this time, it took."

In 1976, Phil and Clare were married. She was working on Capitol Hill and living close enough to walk to work. She learned the joys of commuting when she moved to Phil's townhouse in Gaithersburg.

"The first year we were married was a test of our relationship. I had bought a lot in South Bethany, next to one my brother owned, and Clare and I set about building a beach house there. Every weekend we were down, watching the construction and then doing the inside work. It was real practice in making decisions and working together."

"I was the first one in all my extended family who didn't marry an Italian woman. We all joked that Clare was on

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PHIL AMORUSO  
cont. from page 5

probation for a while." One year after they married, Clare and Phil went to Italy to the Molise region of Phil's family.

"Clare spoke no Italian and I just had what I had learned in one year at college, but many of my cousins spoke English, so we managed."

Their first son, Nicholas, was born in 1979, and David came along in 1981. Clare was now working part-time on Capitol Hill. They had been looking for a house and not finding what they wanted, when someone at a party-Jim Wilner-suggested they look at Cabin John. "We had never heard of it, but when we saw the town, we liked it. In 1980, we bought the lot at the corner of 76th Street and Arden Road from Erika Rogala, and began making plans for building. Since we had survived the building of the beach house, we had the courage to do it again." In 1984, construction began. Most of the work was done by a contractor, but Phil did some work on it. The family moved in before Christmas of that year.

"Nick was ready to start kindergarten that fall. Since we knew we would be living in Cabin John, we started him at Bannockburn. So for the fall months, Clare and I were doing transport duty." The next summer, their third son, Paul, was born. The boys have all gone through Bannockburn, Pyle, and Whitman. (Paul was at Woods Academy for middle school.)

Over the years, the Amorusos have made several trips across the country, visiting National parks and the sights of America. "We bought a converted van (which we still have) and drove all over the West, the Southwest, and California. On our California trip, the boys were 15, 13, and 6. The older ones were big on body boarding; it's like surf boarding except you don't stand up. So we stopped at every major beach between San Francisco and San Diego. We also took many ski vacations to New England and Utah. The boys became excellent skiers, but Clare and I can't keep up with them—they're too good."

"We get to South Bethany as often as we can. This year we renovated the beach house. We added a small addition to the master bedroom, put on a new roof and siding, and installed central heating and air conditioning. I was the contractor, and I enjoyed it most of the time."

Since Phil started at NIH right out of college, he had amassed enough years to retire in his mid-50's. Clare then began working full-time as a systems analyst with the Senate Democratic Policy Committee. And Phil became more active in the family lawn service business.

"The older boys started cutting neighbors' lawns when they were 12 or 13. We would cart their equipment around to the jobs. They distributed flyers and put ads in the Village News, and over the years their business grew. When he was old enough, Paul started helping. My job was maintaining the

equipment—the mowers, weed-whackers, leaf blowers. When I retired, I took over the business. There were several reasons. When you work for the government, you're eligible for a pension, but not for Social Security. Now I've been building up the necessary quarters. I keep all the records and figure the taxes. In fact, we've been doing that since the boys were 15 or so. A big plus for me is that the work is outside; after 31 years of 8+-hour days in an office, I feel free and easy. The physical work keeps me active and healthy. I'm my own boss, and set my own schedule. I go home for lunch. And I enjoy meeting the people who are customers and their neighbors who stop by to visit while I'm working. I limit the service to Cabin John, Bannockburn, and Carderock. After I retired I got calls to do consulting, but I wasn't interested. I wanted something completely different, and I got it."

Phil has time now for gardening, woodworking, and cooking. "All Italians think their mother's spaghetti sauce is the best, and I use my mother's recipe. My parents were in good health all their lives until they passed away in their mid-90's. I have all their recipes which I use, to see if history will repeat. Every Christmas, I cook the traditional Italian seafood dinner for the family and friends, just like I remember celebrating in Philadelphia with my grandfather and aunts and uncles when I was growing up."

Nick graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in finance, and spent his junior year in Italy. Phil visited him during that year and connected with relatives in Trieste, Milan, and Campo Basso. David is a student at Maryland and is spending a semester in Prague. Phil and Clare will be visiting him in late November. Paul is a senior at Whitman.

The Amorusos love Cabin John for the same reason they chose it almost 20 years ago. "This town has character. We didn't want a suburban cookie-cutter development. Cabin John is truly heterogeneous. People stay here. You can know and enjoy all your neighbors. And of course the location is perfect—small community inside the Washington Beltway."

Phil Amoruso is a happy man.

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# LOCAL CONGREGATIONS INVITE YOU TO SHARE THE SEASON

The historic **Hermon Presbyterian Church**, established 1874, located at 7801 Persimmon Tree Lane, will celebrate the holiday season on Sunday, December 21 at 7P.M. with their annual Candlelight and Carol Sing. Come Join Us. All denominations are welcome.

**The Church of the Redeemer**, 6201 Dunrobbin Drive, is holding a Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, December 6, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. St. Nicholas himself will pay a visit at 2 p.m., followed by a reading of Clement Clark Moore's *The Night Before Christmas*. Crafts, baked goods and refreshments will be featured. Bring a can or box of food for Manna House; or a winter hat, gloves, scarf, or socks for the "hat tree," for the homeless. Contact: Jefferson Arrington, 240-417-9990



THE VILLAGE NEWS is published monthly except in July and January and is sent free to all 800+ homes in Cabin John. Others may subscribe for \$5 per year. Send news, ads, letters, and subscriptions to:  
The Village News PO Box 164  
Cabin John, MD 20818  
[or heidi@alumni.vanderbilt.edu]

**The next deadline is 10 AM Wednesday Jan 14th for the issue mailing Jan 22nd.**

People who make the village news possible: Barbara and Reed Martin, Lorraine Minor, Heidi Brown Lewis. Regular Contributors: Burr Gray, Andy Rice, Barbara Martin, John Rabner, Diane Leatherman. Ads - 301-229-3515. Neighborly News - 301-229-3482, Features/news - 301-320-0918.



The Village News  
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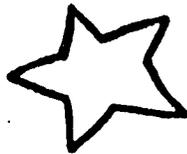
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# DECEMBER 14

Treats for Children!  
musical program!



annual  
Cabin John  
Citizens  
Association

Coffee and dessert!

entertainment!

SUNDAY DECEMBER 14th  
4:30-6:30 P.M.

caroling!



## ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY!

⇒ AT THE CLARA BARTON CENTER ←  
guest appearance by Santa Claus

- Drinks provided. Please bring cookies to share.
- Supported by local merchants.
- Co-sponsored by the Cabin John Citizens Association and the Clara Barton Community Center.