March 2004

Village News

Volume 37 Issue 6 — Serving the people of Cabin John and beyond

Deanna Bogart Band Dance To Benefit Clara Barton Community Center on February 28

Just a reminder of the February 28 Dance (7:30 - 11:00 pm, dancing starts at 8:15 pm) at the Community Center. The Deanna Bogart Band (www.deannabogart.com) will play some great music, and this is a wonderful opportunity to do some serious dancing, mingling, and partying close to home.

Net proceeds from the sale of tickets will be used to support our local Community Center. Tickets in general are $25/person. (You can pay $50 a ticket if you want to help cover the cost of the Band and be known as a Member of the Mosh Pit.) You must be 21 or over to purchase tickets. Desserts and munchies are included in the ticket price, and a cash bar will be available for beer, wine and soda/water. Please contact Trudi Bick at 301-229-5929 or trudibick@comcast.net for tickets. Checks should be made payable to "Friends of Clara Barton Community Center" or "Friends of CBCC". Feel free to make a donation even if you can't attend the festivities.

If you are interested in helping out with this event (decorations, setup, stage set-up, food serving, cleanup, etc), please contact Lori Rieckelman at (301) 320-6299 or rieckell@aol.com.



© Jim Richards

The Deanna Bogart Band.

—Burr Gray

The next CJCA meeting will be February 24, 7:30 pm at the Clara Barton Center. See agenda on page 6.

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Lower Turnout at Recent Blood Drive

According to the Red Cross personnel, our most recent blood drive generated 42 units of blood. This was somewhat below our expectations since we had 60 people lined up ahead of time, but on any given day, some folk will have colds or just not be able to continue to the final drop.

We thank everyone who came to the Community Center, including those folk who attended the sign-in table: Larry Heflin, Neal Helm (who also helped with publicity), Werner Schumann, Karen Melchar (who also made calls and lined up the advance appointments), Sondra Baxt, and Dominique Maggio. The Red Cross had problems with their computers so we had more back up during the 1-3 time slot than we would have liked. We've told

(continued on page 6)

Neighborly News

by Barbara Martin

Sharon and Michael Liebman are new neighbors on 79th Place. In December their daughter **Meira** was born 2 weeks after the family moved in. Meira's big brothers are **Aaron**, 9, and **Seth**, 5. The Liebmans moved here from the Merrimack Park area in Bethesda. Jennifer is an attorney with a consulting firm; Michael is an Assistant US Attorney in DC.

Jennifer O'Connor and **Paul Meyer** of 78th Street welcomed their new daughter, **Dylan**, in November. Jennifer and Paul also have a son, **Ian**, 2. Jennifer is an attorney with a private law firm. Paul is a stay-home dad.

Diane Leatherman of 78th Street was featured in a recent *Gazette* article. Diane continues to push the project she has taken on of having the County put in an access road off Seven Locks Road to the historic Black cemetery near the Gibson Grove AME Church (now the Agape Church), so that relatives and others can visit graves in that site. At present there is no access except through the yard of a resident on Cypress Grove Lane.

Mario Tama of 78th Street has completed his 29-year career with the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, as area construction manager for Naval facilities in the National Capital Region. He now has "more time for outdoor activities, conservation interests, reading, home projects, and maybe some consulting."

I know there are more new babies in town, but I need to hear from the parents to get details. Babies, get your parents moving! Please call 301-229-3482 or e-mail barbmartin@comcast.net with news of residents past or present.

Phoenix Rising

Proudly Presents

A Unique Day of Arts & Crafts

Anthony Owens (an original Callander Drive Bannockburner) and his fiancée, Dr. Martha Faraday (originally from Georgetown), will be presenting their exciting and unique line of art and crafts.

WHEN: **Saturday, April 3, 9 to 5 pm**
WHERE **Bannockburn Community Clubhouse**

Free admission, extensive free refreshments, free $50 cash drawing. And, most importantly, free Art & Craft workshops for kids of all ages. Phoenix Rising will provide all the necessary supplies in an effort to promote the arts.

Local artisans who would like to participate, please call Anthony Owens at 301-320-6809.

The entire Owens family looks forward to a day of fun and artistic exploration. Anthony and Martha travel the East Coast almost every weekend presenting their art, so please leave a message.

Community Calendar

FEB

28 ..... Townwide Dance at Clara Barton Center
7:30 – 11 pm (see pg. 1)

MAR

21 ..... Theodore Roosevelt Presentation at Clara Barton Historic Site
1 – 3 pm

25 ..... Parent Education Series on Music
Clara Barton Center
7:30 – 9 pm (see pg. 6)

27 ..... Ping Pong Exhibition
Clara Barton Center
1 – 3 pm (see pg. 11)

Mac Thornton: Do Something About It!

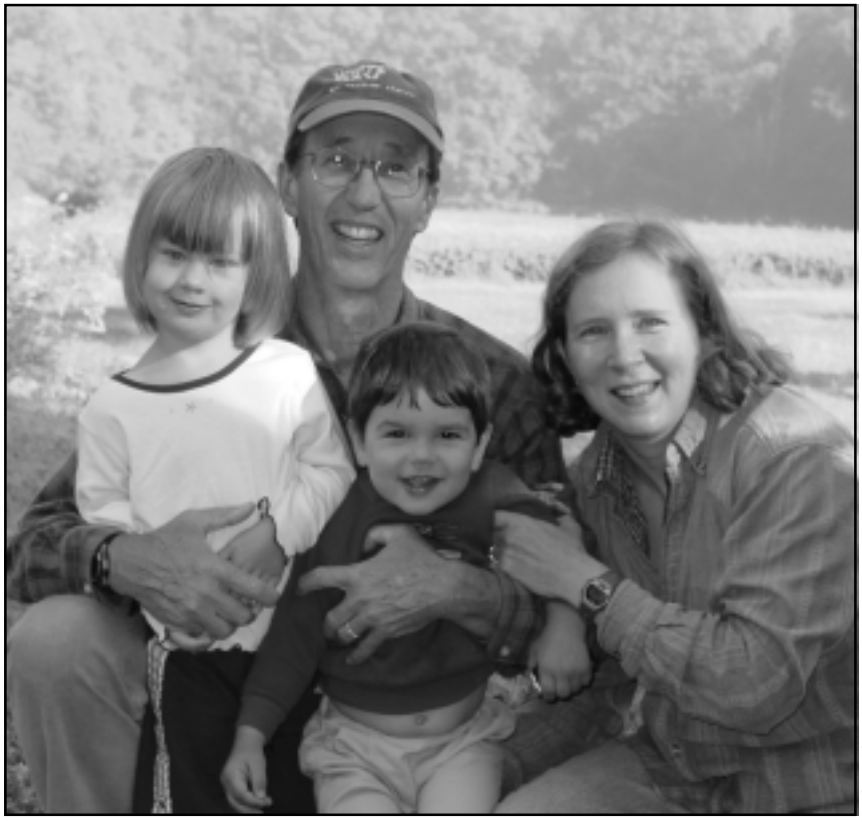
by Barbara Martin

Mac Thornton grew up in Greenville, Delaware, a suburb of Wilmington where his dad worked for DuPont. Mac is the oldest of four, with a brother and two sisters. "Our family was the first of the Thorntons who lived north of the Mason-Dixon line. The Virginia Thorntons go back to Jamestown, 1640."

Mac had celiac disease, a digestive condition, for the first 8 years of his life and was small and sickly during early childhood. Once cured of that condition, he made up for lost time by intensely pursuing physical activities. In junior high he joined the Boy Scouts and happily joined all their outdoor events. In high school he became an enthusiastic runner, capturing the state championship in cross-country. His family took vacations at Nags Head, furthering his love of water.

"By 11th grade I knew I wanted to be a lawyer. I was interested in politics and saw the law as a way to be a part of that. I started college at Wesleyan, a small men's school in Connecticut, in the middle of nowhere. But midway through my junior year I transferred to Stanford in California, still keeping my political science major. What a difference! Stanford was huge, I lived in a co-ed dorm, and the students came in all variety of backgrounds, colors, and political persuasions. The stadium seated 100,000, and we watched Jim Plunkett and OJ Simpson on the field. Yes, I was one of the anti-Vietnam War demonstrators, with long hair and John Lennon glasses. I was in the sit-in demonstration when students took over the Atomic Energy Laboratory."

Mac played intra-mural baseball and football, and pursued those sports into his 30's. He went on to Stanford's Law School. "Ralph Nader was my hero. The consumer protection movement was gaining momentum and I intended to be part of it." In his third year, he came to Washington for a semester, working for the Center for Law and Social Policy, a public interest law firm specializing in environmental and welfare cases. After graduation from Stanford he passed the California Bar in the summer of 1972, "just a few days before the Watergate fiasco."



© Susan Somerset

Mac Thornton with his wife, Molly, and their children, Elena and Andre.

A newly minted lawyer, Mac came to Washington to work for the Bureau of Consumer Protection in the Federal Trade Commission, going after false advertising tire companies like Goodyear and Firestone, sellers of swamp land in Florida, and computer schools that recruited students with promises never fulfilled.

"I really liked the work, but I wasn't getting the in-court experience I wanted, so in 1978 I joined the Department of Justice in their Criminal Fraud Division, and became a white collar criminal prosecutor. It was wonderfully challenging and I was getting plenty of trial experience. Often I was given long-term assignments in cities such as Dallas or Springfield, Illinois. It was lonely work; being out of town so much made it difficult to maintain relationships and I got tired of hotel rooms."

Mac left Justice for a private practice firm, where most of his work concerned financial fraud. Then in 1983, he returned to the Federal Government working for Health and Human Services in the area of Medicare fraud. He supervised a team of seven lawyers, working under a new statute that cracked

(continued on page 7)

Looking Back in Cabin John

by Andrew E. Rice

More on the Mystery of Cabin John's Name

In the course of preparing her forthcoming book about sites of historic or natural interest along the Potomac River, Gail Spilsbury has done extensive research on the origin of the name Cabin John. Her work adds details to the legend of "John of the Cabin" and, with her permission, I have drawn on her findings in this column.

One of the fullest accounts of the mysterious John appeared in *The Evening Star* which during the first half of the 20th century was Washington's leading newspaper. An article that appeared on April 6, 1913, recounted the tale as follows:

"Before the National Capital was located on the Potomac....the present property along Cabin John creek was a secure hiding place. It was there that a crude man named 'John' built a cabin by the creek, lived like a hermit and subsisted apparently on game, fish, nuts and wild plants....

"This strange man inhabited his humble hut for many years, shunning and avoiding everybody, claiming no neighbors except the rocks and trees, and no associates or companions except his gun and his fierce and fleet-footed dogs....At times curious persons ventured into the vicinity of the cabin and frequently they would hear music on some peculiar instrument, and sometimes he would sing songs and quaint and touching melodies in a foreign language, apparently referring to distant lands and one whose memory he cherished...."

The article goes on to say that a large white rock on the middle of the Potomac was known as "John's Target," because he used it for rifle practice. He navigated the river in a dug-out log canoe, and occasionally shopped in Alexandria where he paid for his purchases with Spanish or French coins. Some boys who stole through the bushes one summer day when he was bathing in the creek reported that tattoos covered much of his body, suggesting that he had had a seafaring life. So the story grew that John must have once been a pirate and that he had hidden treasure from a pirate ship somewhere in the woods.

"Sometime during the year 1825," the *Star* article continues, "a small piece of paper, faded with age, was found under a dilapidated grain bin in an old mill located on the banks [of the creek], in which the lines were written in the English language, but the writing indicated the hand of a foreigner." It was a poem. The newspaper quotes only one verse, but another document unearthed by Spilsbury in her research offers two:

'John of the Cabin' — a curious wight —
Sprang out of the river one dark stormy night;
He built a warm hut in a lonely retreat,
And lived many years upon fishes and meat.

When the last lone raccoon on the creek he had slain,
It is said he jumped into the river again.
As no name to the creek by the ancients was given,
It was called 'Cabin John' after John went to Heaven."

So far no buried treasure has been found. Many would say, however, that Cabin John itself is a treasure to be cherished.



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MHIC 26

CJCA News

by Burr Gray

The next meeting of the CJCA will be February 24, 7:30 pm at the Clara Barton Center.

Next CJCA Meeting Agenda —1) Discussion of historic Cabin John cemetery, 2) presentation on the two large developments proposed for the nearby two rock quarries along River Road, 3) possible presentation by Billie Wilson (County Rec Dept) on operations/outlook for the Community Center and 4) putting old issues (back to the 70's of *The Village News* on CJ home page.

Summary of Results of CJCA Meetings of Nov. 25, 2003 and Jan. 27, 2004 — The Jan. 27 meeting was cancelled due to snow/sleet. At the Nov. 25, 2003 meeting, the attendees voted to support and join the appeal of the permit issued by the County to allow the expansion of the Captain's Market. Elliott Gitlin, an architect in the old Firehouse building, presented his opinion that the County had erroneously issued the permit and listed 4-5 reasons for his position. A hearing on the permit is set for Feb. 25, 2004. The group that owns the Captain's Market hopes to put a clothes pickup/dropoff for dry cleaning and flower shop in the new building.

Report on Payment of CJCA Dues — We have had a great year with 258 dues-payers contributing $4450 to date. This compares to $3300 in dues in FY 02. So we are having an outstanding year in terms of the total dollars contributed and percentage of residents paying dues. Families giving above and beyond the $15 yearly membership are: Austin/ Lazarus, Bilik, Brown-Lewis, Burkhardt, Daniel, N & L Martin, Massett, McGaw, Palumbo, B & D Roberts, Silverman, Wainright. Many thanks. You will see the results of your contributions shortly when the new Cabin John Directory comes out. (Yeah, yeah, you've heard that promise before, but it is going to be out soon.)

Parent Education Night

Clara Barton Center for Children welcomes all in the community who are interested in young children to attend our parent education night on Wednesday, March 24, from 7:30 – 9 pm at the Clara Barton Community Center. Lisa Guven-Hagen, director of early childhood education at the Levine School of Music, will offer an engaging presentation about the effects of live music on the development of young children.

What does the kingdom of heaven look like?

GOD wants all people to come together as one in service, in purpose, in fellowship and in worship of their creator. Concord - St. Andrew's United Methodist Church is one of the most diverse congregations in the area. People from all over the world worship here — from Japan, Korea, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Czech Republic, Sri Lanka, China, India, South America, and all over the U.S. Come worship with us, and you might glimpse a growing corner of heaven.

"Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world..."



Concord - St. Andrew's
United Methodist Church
5910 Goldsboro Road
Bethesda, Maryland
301-229-3383
Worship 10:00 Sunday Sch. 10:15

BLOOD DRIVE *continued from page 1*

the Red Cross that they need to do better next time, but many thanks to those who showed patience during that time period.

We have had eight blood drives in the past four years in Cabin John and have generated 386 pints from those efforts. A number of Cabin John residents have participated in 6 or 7 of those drives. You might have noticed that it always seems as though there is an urgent need for blood at the time of our blood drives. That is partly because we schedule the drives for those times of the year when historically there is a need, and also because there seems to be a chronic need for blood. The pool of eligible donors is smaller and the demand for blood is greater than ever. Once again, many thanks to those who came to donate. We don't list your names for privacy reasons, but you have contributed to what is probably the most immediate lifesaving thing that our community does. Our next blood drive is set for June 6. —



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MAC THORNTON
cont. from page 4

down on false claims made by doctors, hospitals, and health care providers. In 1990 he became Chief Counsel to the Inspector General of HHS. The next decade saw a big surge of Federal enforcement against Medicare fraud. By the time he retired in 2002, he was managing an office of 70.

Back in 1972 when Mac came to Washington, he was excited to discover that this area is the acknowledged whitewater capital of the US. Olympic champions and hopefuls live along our section of the Potomac, practicing on the ideal stretches of water. "I bought an aluminum canoe in '74, and 10 years later bought a kayak. This is the very best place to be for serious whitewater running. Within 250 miles are scores of whitewater canyons. During the spring months, the Potomac is perfect provided you're dressed appropriately and know what you're doing. I spent all my free time on the Potomac and the rivers of West Virginia and made wonderful friends among those who share my enthusiasm."

"It was more than the thrill of the sport—it was a strong appreciation for the beautiful natural surroundings. In the mid-80's I became very

(continued on page 8)



Glen Echo Baptist Church

Serving Cabin John families since 1939

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Teaching Truth in a relevant way

Sunday School . . . . . .9:30 am
Sunday Services . . . . . .11:00 am
Wednesday Activities . . . . .7:00 pm
Mid-Week Bible Study. . . . Vassar Circle
Children 6-10 years old . . . Annex *
* University and Harvard

MAC THORNTON
cont. from page 7



aware that things were changing along the rivers; the environment was being degraded. In West Virginia, acid from mines and waste from lumbering operations were draining into the water, farmers were taking bulldozers into the streams to divert their direction, and some officials had plans to dam the rivers to create lakes for swimming and motorboats. I got angry. In '87 I became the conservation chairman of the local Canoe Cruisers, and in '89 I founded the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, a group that now works out of Elkins, WVA with a staff of six."

"River protection became an obsession with me. I was determined not to let natural treasures be destroyed. Truly, the Potomac Gorge (the section from Great Falls to Georgetown) is the wildest stretch of river near a major city anywhere in the world. In '92, Senator Charles Robb cut down the trees on his riverside estate across from Little Falls, blatantly ignoring the detrimental effect on the Potomac River and its banks. And there was no organization to stop that kind of thing."

So Mac called a meeting of concerned people, and the Potomac Conservancy was formed, as a land trust and advocacy group. The Conservancy was incorporated in 1993, with Mac as co-chairman of the board. The first large acquisition was 8-acre Minnie's Island, donated by Henry and Margaret Reuss, then residents of Cabin John. The Island is now the Conservancy's field headquarters, a place for students of botany, biology, and ecology to learn, and for special outings by guests who are carried to the island by canoes. In December of 1994, the dedication of the Reuss's gift received big press coverage by CNN, the Washington Post, and publications across the country. The Conservancy now holds conservation easements on thousands of acres. Mac's term on the Conservancy's board ended in 2002.

Years ago, Mac became a Class 3-5 whitewater kayaker, mastering many rivers in Western Maryland, including the legendary Youghiogheny. It was on one of his treks that he met Molly Carr, a nurse practitioner from Bethesda. Molly was a member of the US Whitewater Team before it became an Olympic sport. Molly and Mac were married in 1996. And that's how they came to Cabin John. "I had lived on Capitol Hill for 22 years, but Molly was not interested in city living. We both knew the Cabin John area from long experience of going on the Potomac, and we just naturally gravitated here to find a home." They moved to Wishbone Terrace as soon as they were married.

In 2001, their family expanded with the adoption of Elena, a beautiful blond girl from Russia. "Three weeks after 9/11, we flew into St. Petersburg, then took a train north through gorgeous arboreal forests that reminded me of northern Quebec. Elena was the love of our hearts the minute we saw her. When all the legal documents were complete and I held her in my arms to board the plane for home, I felt this was the most wonderful blessing of my life. I get misty remembering it."

One year later, Molly and Mac went back to Russia for their new son, Andre. Each of their children was 15 months old when they were adopted. Now Elena is 3½; her brother Andre is 2½. "We celebrate their birthdays both in July and now their 'coming home' days both in October. This neighborhood is a perfect place for raising kids. I grew up with streams and woods and here we have both right outside the door, in a safe and beautiful place for our children. We all spend a lot of time on the towpath and on the river canoeing. The kids love the outdoors, just as Molly and I do." Next fall both children will be at Clara Barton Center for Children. So happy are Molly and Mac with their family that Mac has become "an evangelist for international adoption."

While Molly is essentially a stay-home mom, she is back in school, studying herbal medicine. Mac retired from Federal service in October 2002, after 30 years. A year ago he went to work part-time for a private law firm whose clients are hospitals and health care organizations needing legal advice in guarding their businesses against running afoul of health care fraud.

Many Cabin John residents first became aware of Mac Thornton in connection with his efforts to stop the sewer smell along the towpath. "When I first moved to Cabin John and started running on the towpath, I was appalled by the intermittent foul odors. I found that there are five sewer gas outlets just between Lock 8 and Carderock. On the towpath, I met Larry Heflin who had been a part of the engineering team that designed the original sewer line. From him I learned that there was an agreement with the Washington Area Sewer

Authority (WASA) which was responsible for keeping the sewer line odor-free. That obviously was not being done."

Mac enlisted the help of the Potomac Conservancy and spearheaded the tracking down of specifics about the sewer, the agreements, and the applicable laws. "We found that WASA was operating in violation of their permits. Charcoal filters were to have been periodically changed on all sewer vents and that had not been done. It was a failed experiment that had never been remedied. Matt Berris (of the Potomac Conservancy) contacted the top WASA officials and essentially they blew us off. So we went to court. We joined forces with the national American Canoe Association, and under the Clean Water Act we brought suit in 2000. As a result WASA has agreed to 'fix the problem.' Right now the project is in the permit stage."

A major reason for the successful outcome of the suit was the widespread political campaign waged to enlist the help of influential individuals and groups. In the process of organizing forces to stop the sewer stench, Mac met CJ Citizens Association president Burr Gray, and interested him to the extent that the Citizens Association became a major player in protesting WASA's failure to meet its obligation, and subsequently, Burr joined the Potomac Conservancy and now serves on its Board of Directors.

Conservation and nature organizations also supported the suit. "We just had to call their attention to the offensive situation. The C&O National Historical Park is the fourth most-visited park in the National Park system."

"WASA has made a public commitment—to citizens, to politicians, to the Park Service—that the problem will be fixed. There is no question: *it will be fixed*. With our lawsuit, we will make sure it happens."

Mac looks forward to full retirement. "I want to become really involved with the Citizens Association. We love Cabin John. Look at the Bannockburn playground where Elena and Andre will go to school—it's like a rainbow of kids. That's what we want for our children and ourselves. We're home." —❧







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Neighborhood Services

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Table Tennis/Ping Pong Exhibition at Community Center March 27

CJCA and the Potomac II Ping Pong Group are sponsoring an event on March 27, 2004 from 2-4 pm at the Community Center that will feature 2-time Olympic Table Tennis competitor Ying-Hua Cheng and some of his students from his Gaithersburg training facility. Refreshments will be served. Demonstration of table tennis skills will be followed by the opportunity for attendees to practice their ping pong skills on the various tables set up at the Community Center. Everyone is invited, regardless of skill level or age. The Potomac II Ping Pong Group meets at the Clara Barton Community Center on Mon (6-9 pm), Fri (6-9 pm), and Sat (1-4 pm). Yearly membership is available for $60/person, $90 for couple, $90/family (3 or more people), and $40 for seniors (65 and over). You can join by contacting Herman Yeh (301-496-4055 (w), hjyeh@starpower.net).

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Mike Roark
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Centennial Events Planned For Town of Glen Echo

A varied and interesting schedule of events is being planned for the celebration in 2004 of The Town of Glen Echo's 100 years of existence. All events are free and the general public is invited to many of the activities. They will take place at the Glen Echo Town Hall. The series started last month with a talk and slide show by the eminent local historian William Offutt, author of the book *Bethesda*.

On Sunday, February 15, Harry Ways will speak on the construction of the Washington Aqueduct and its Chief Engineer Montgomery Meigs, as well as the Cabin John Bridge. Mr. Ways is the retired Chief of the Washington Aqueduct of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

On Sunday, March 21, Holly Shimizu will speak on "Plants Native to the Potomac Region" at the town hall from 3 – 5 pm. Ms. Shimizu is the Executive Director of the U.S. Botanic Garden. She will show slides and give advice on how to build a native plant garden.

On Palm Sunday, April 4, an event is scheduled celebrating the actual anniversary of the town, and a speaker will be scheduled.

Saturday, May 15, will feature a town garden tour. Other events will be publicized later.

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Hikers, Hot Chocolate And Ice, Oh My!



Winter gear like this was needed to keep warm during the Cabin John Fever Hike.

The third annual Cabin John Fever Hike took place on Sunday February 8. After two weeks of snow on the ground, the Cabin John Creek trail was icy in patches and slick mud in others. A hearty group of hikers trekked the mile-long path in order to break the winter doldrums and stamp out their cabin fever!

Leading the hikers was a representation of boys from Cub Scout Pack 1320 who set a vigorous pace. Hikers of all ages made it from one end of the path to the other, as did some four-legged friends. At times the hiking resembled ice-skating as the compacted snow and thaw/freeze cycle had conspired to make some points along the trail precariously slick.

At the end of the hike at the lower playground near the Union Arch Bridge, all were rewarded with warm apple cider or hot chocolate and cookies.

Thanks to all who participated and thanks to Kathleen Black for posting the signs and serving the hot drinks.

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WINTER WATERCOLOR CLASSES: Small, friendly classes for adults. All levels, including complete beginners. Held in teacher's Victorian home in Garrett Park. Martha Seigel, MFA, The American University. 23 years experience. Call 301-946-5388.

SEEKING HOUSING: Female seeking one bedroom with private bath to rent in or near Cabin John. I am a long-time Cabin John resident who works in Cabin John. I have an old Husky dog who is very quiet and well behaved - just like me! We hope to remain in Cabin John because we love it so. Please call 301-257-1076.

2004 MEMBERSHIP TO CLARA BARTON WEIGHT ROOM. $125. Value. For Sale - $50. 301-229-3482.

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.

THE VILLAGE NEWS is published monthly except in July and December 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 Mar 17th for the issue mailing Mar 25th.

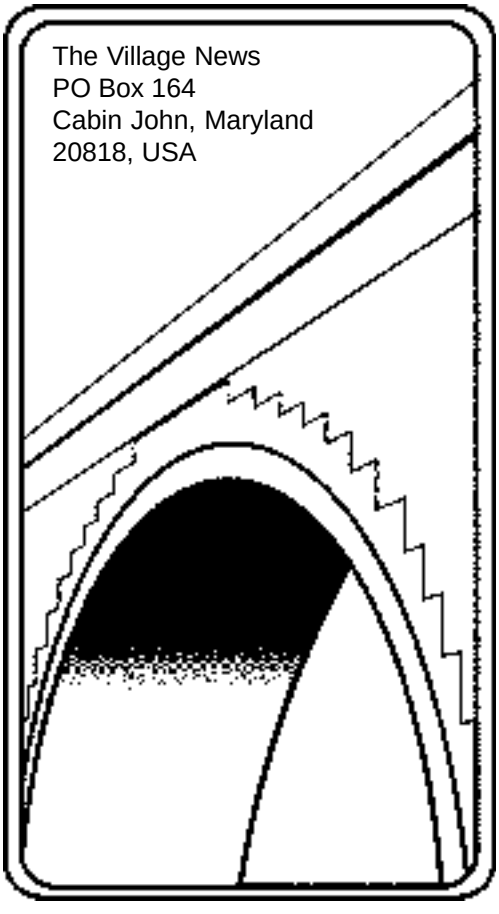
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