June 2006

Village News

Volume 39 Issue 9 — Serving the people of Cabin John and beyond

Departing Cabin John Advocate Helen Daniel Hopes That Neighbors Will Follow Her Lead

by Tina Rouse

In 1983, Helen Daniel was only vaguely aware of a river's-edge community called Cabin John. She loved to walk her dog along the C&O Canal, and the easiest way to get from her Cape Cod style house off of Bradley Boulevard was to head down Wilson Lane, turn onto MacArthur, and pass under the Clara Barton Parkway by way of 79th Street and Riverside Drive. But in 1983, Helen was also looking for a change: after five years in the building industry,

(continued on page 3)



Helen Daniel

Another Excellent Cabin John Creek Cleanup

On April 30th, the following local residents participated in a cleanup of our beautiful creek: Alexandra & Caitlin Schoen; Benno & Phoebe Schmidt; Kenna Libes; Michelle Xu; Larry & Alex West; Melissa Bell and Jim & Kyra McKinna; Kelsey Yoklavitch, Michael Stuhl, Marcy Harrison (who intrepidly took on the northern part of the CJ section of the creek); Eva Herscowitz & Terri Strassburger; Kerry White; Jake & Alyson Ross; Sheryl and David Bloch; Jordan Bernstein; Kolya & Sohia Illavionov; Alexandra Vacroux; Anna McGuire; Paula, Matt, Julia and Anna Curran; and Burr Gray. The Friends of the Cabin John Creek Watershed also had a group working on the section between River Road and Bradley Blvd organized by John Hall (who also occasionally does the readings at the CJ July 4th event). The creek section running along River Road had been cleaned two weeks earlier by a group from Carderock Springs, managed by Jim Finucane. So the creek is looking good even though it continues to suffer erosion from stormwater runoff, which is still the major environmental issue facing it.

Posting of Flags Along MacArthur Blvd

If you are interested in helping post the flags that CJCA puts up each summer along MacArthur Blvd, please meet at the Firehouse Cleaners parking lot on Sunday, May 28 at 2:00 p.m. Bring a ladder if you have one.

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Neighborly News

by Barbara Martin

A new Cabin Johnner arrived on Friday, April 21st at 3:14 PM. He was 6 lbs. 3 ozs. and 20 inches. **Douglas Alexander Barbor Henderson** was born to **Doug** and **Janine Henderson**. Big sister **Ava** is happy to have him as the new member of the team.

Send your news items to Barbara Martin by email to barbmartin@comcast.net or by calling 301-229-3482.

Community Calendar

MAY

23 ..... CJCA meeting
Clara Barton Center
7:30 pm (see p. 4)

23 ..... Bike Path Presentation
Bannockburn Elementary
7:00 pm (see p. 4)

28 ..... MacArthur Blvd Flag Hanging
Firehouse Cleaners parking lot
2:00 pm (see p. 1)

JUN

4 ..... Cabin John Blood Drive
Clara Barton Center
10 am - 3:45 pm (see p. 4)

16-18 ..... Cabin John Dumpster Days
Clara Barton Center
9 am - 4 pm (see p. 5)

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DANIEL
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along with the burden of multiple home ownership, she decided it was time to sell her house and went looking for a rental property. When she saw an advertisement for a two-bedroom condo in a multi-unit building in Cabin John, she could only picture single-family bungalows surrounded by large trees, and she was intrigued. She called the condo owner, a minister in DC, who told her she was too late and that he had four or five other rental applications in hand. Helen managed to convince him to let her see the place, just to assuage her curiosity, and he arranged for one of his parishioners who lived in the building to meet her and show her the place.

What Helen went to see was one of the 29 units in the building, former rental apartments built in 1954 on a transitionally zoned parcel of land next to the Captain's Market. Tucked into the trees along Tomlinson Avenue, the four-story building was easy to miss driving down MacArthur. Originally known as a bit of a rough place to live, it had been renovated in 1977 and turned condo in 1978.

Helen and her tour guide, Mo, hit it off. When Helen realized that the condo was perfect for her and she couldn't beat the four-mile commute down MacArthur to her job, she talked Mo into convincing the owner to pick her over the other applicants. Helen moved in with the help of friends on a cold fall day, the last day of November 1983, and bought the unit three years later when the minister was assigned to a parish in his hometown in western Michigan.

Finding the community to be comfortable and enveloping, Helen soon made friends among the other building occupants and attended a few of the annual Crab Feasts, but her work kept her busy with a lot of travel. All that changed in 1990 when she lost her job. Helen's loss turned into Cabin John's gain. Suddenly finding herself with free time, Helen began devoting more time to the condo board on which she had been serving, to the point that the board asked her to take on the position of the departing building manager, a position she held until last fall.

She also became drawn into community issues when she joined the Cabin John Citizens Association Board and when Garrett & Smith, owners of the MacArthur Boulevard shopping plaza, proposed an expansion to the development. Their plan was to construct a separate building to house the Bethesda Co-op, which occupied space in the original strip of stores but was looking to expand. The community expressed deep concerns to Montgomery County officials about the adequacy of parking, the safety of access routes, and the overall need for the plan. In spite of the frequent and vociferous appeals from Helen and other Cabin Johners to stop the new building, the plan was approved, the building built, and the Co-op moved in.

There was additional fall-out from the campaign to stop the shopping plaza expansion. Because so much focus and energy had been devoted to that activity, little attention was paid to organizing and promoting the 1991 Crab Feast. Few advance tickets were sold to Cabin John's largest fundraising event, and when the day of the picnic dawned cold and rainy, attendance was very low. For the first time since it was organized in 1970 to support tutoring programs, the Crab Feast lost money.

(continued on page 6)

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CJCA News

by Burr Gray

The next meeting of the CJCA will be May 23, 7:30 pm at the Clara Barton Community Center.

Next CJCA Meeting Agenda – 1) talk by US Senate candidate Alan Lichtman (also history professor at American University) on his candidacy and the issues followed by short Q & A; 2) discussion and update on whether to support possible subdivision (from 3 lots to 6 lots) of property across MacArthur Blvd from the shopping center; 3) election of new officers.

Summary of Results of CJCA Meeting of April 25, 2006 – 1) CJCA members voted to recognize and congratulate the Cabin John Fire Department on the 75th anniversary of their formation; 2) CJ resident Gary Barnhard presented more information regarding the possible development of the 1.9 acre parcel (consisting of three lots proposed for a total of six smaller lots) across MacArthur Blvd from the Shopping Center. The proposed resubdivision would require no variance or special exceptions. He indicated that all the proposed lots would be greater than the 9000 sq. ft. that is required by applicable R-90 zoning, and that while the actual average lot size area would being reduced somewhat, it would not alter the character of the neighborhood. He noted that while the Bethesda Chevy Chase Master Plan recommended that no new curb cuts be allowed onto MacArthur Blvd, numerous curb cuts had been authorized subsequent to its publication. His proposal would add one new curb cut on MacArthur Boulevard and one new curb cut on 79th Street. The cost of the houses to be built would be between $1.5 and $2.0 million. The current design proposal would preserve the character of the existing fieldhouse home and add a complementary addition to the rear of the structure. Two contemporary bungalows would front on 79th Street. Two additional homes with a building line averaged between 8000 and 8014 MacArthur would front on MacArthur. One additional home would be built set back in the woods similar to 8012 MacArthur Boulevard. Gary stated that he has signed up with the Green Building Alliance and was committed to meet or exceed the new National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Green Building Guidelines for energy efficient, environmentally sound design. Gary made it clear that what he was presenting represented the best available data, but nothing about the project was assured until after settlement and the resubdivision application was acted on. The following concerns were voiced at the meeting: 1) the scale of any new houses located on 79th Street should not overwhelm the existing homes, 2) the choice of side yard setbacks should balance the street scape, not distort it further, 3) the preservation of large trees in the right-of-way and wherever possible on the lots is an important consideration to the community, and 4) storm water management and the possible existence of a perched water table proximate to 79th Street are key environmental concerns that must be addressed in any plan. In an effort to get information out to CJ residents, a streetscape and other data will be forthcoming (see box next page). Additional information on the project can be found at *http://www.macarthurwoods.com* or by contacting MacArthur Woods LLC /Gary Barnhard via email to *barnhard@barnhard.com* or phone 301-229-8012.

Blood Drive – The next Cabin John/Glen Echo/ Bannockburn Community Blood Drive will take place on Sunday, June 4, 2006 at the Clara Barton Community Center in Cabin John. Please contact Cabin John resident Karen Melchar (*ardenroad@mac.com*) if you are willing and able to donate blood. The time slots (done at 15 minute increments) are from 10 am to 3:45 pm.

Bike Path Presentation by the County - On May 23, 2006 (7 pm) at the Bannockburn Elementary School cafeteria, Montgomery County personnel will give an update on the status of their project to make MacArthur Blvd and the adjacent bike path friendlier to cyclists and pedestrians. Much of the project will occur in Cabin John, where the proposal is to 1) separate the shared use path from MacArthur Blvd by a 5 ft. grassy median strip, and 2) expand MacArthur Blvd slightly in order to create narrow lanes along either side of MacArthur for the high speed cyclists. CJCA has taken an official position in the past in support of the proposal.

Successful Joint Project Painting the Senior Room at the Community Center. On April 22, 2006, Mac Thornton, CJ resident and dad of Elena and Andre, who attend the Center for Children, organized the painting project and was ably assisted by Pascal Pittman, Rick, Joe & Hannah Duffy, Michelle Couste, Aaron Rosansky, Julie Rogers, and Andy Malmgreen. This is the first of various joint projects anticipated between the Center for Children and CJCA. Many thanks to the Center for Children for initiating these efforts.

Mark Your Calendars for Cabin John Dumpster Days!

Cabin John Dumpster Days will be held on June 16-18, Friday, Saturday, Sunday from 9 am to 4 pm. Dumpsters will be provided by the CJCA at the Clara Barton Community Center. This is a great opportunity to clean out your garage, basement or attic and dispose of trash, recyclables, paint and hazardous materials.(Please see below for mandatory regulations regarding hazardous waste.) We will only be accepting residential refuse from Cabin John households. No commercial vehicles.

Please separate your reusables (e.g. toys, books) and recyclables (metal, etc) from trash.

We still need volunteers for such tasks as:

- Creating and Posting Signs
- Directing traffic flow the days of the event
- Providing assistance unloading cars, sorting materials, loading dumpsters
- Mixing latex paints with kitty litter in preparation for disposal
- Visiting homes of the elderly or disabled who need help getting disposables out of their houses.

We would especially like to hear, as soon as possible, from individuals who have trucks and are willing to offer any amount of time.Trucks will be used to pick up from the homes of the elderly/disabled and also for shuttling some materials (such as paints, batteries, etc) to a nearby drop site located at Westland Middle School. To help in any way or for any amount of time please contact Werner Schumann at 301-229-8543 (work) or 301-229-3196 (home). You can also contact Michaela Palumbo at 301-320-9423 or email at *cjdumpsterday@aol.com.*

If you are physically unable to bring your discards, we will send someone to pick up from your home. Call or e-mail one of the individuals listed above.

Hazardous Waste Regulations

The following is a list of what will be considered collectable Hazardous Materials - Give us a call if there is anything not on this list that you have a question about discarding.

- Insecticides, Herbicides, Pesticides
- Fertilizers
- Paint thinners and solvents
- Swimming pool chemicals
- Kerosene
- Mercury containing items, i.e. thermostats and thermometers

(continued on page 10)

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Status of the MacArthur Woods, LLC Project

Regretfully, we must report that the MacArthur Woods, LLC project is officially in limbo pending further action by the interested parties. Accordingly, the streetscapes that were prepared can not be published at this time.

We sincerely appreciate the consideration and support provided by the community and look forward to working with our neighbors and the Cabin John Citizens Association in all manners possible to foster a development outcome in the best interests of the community.

—Judy & Gary Barnhard



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DANIEL
cont. from page 3

Despite this double whammy, Helen Daniel wasn't discouraged. Her resolve hardened, and when rumors started flying in1992 that the county was considering the establishment of a turning lane in place of the bike path at the intersection of MacArthur and the Clara Barton on-ramp, she headed up a community traffic committee that took on the issue. When the rumors were confirmed in the face of denials from county officials, the community began a public information campaign, accompanied by a thorough and sophisticated traffic study of the intersection. These proved effective, and in the end Helen received a call from a county official acknowledging that Cabin John had won, and no turning lane would be constructed. This success was parlayed into further concessions from the county to improve access and safety of Cabin John residents along the MacArthur commuting corridor. Some of these concessions have been a long time coming (promised stop signs at the Seven Locks Road/MacArthur Boulevard intersection were finally installed last year!), but have made a big difference to the quality of life in Cabin John.

Over the last 23 years, Helen also stepped up to the plate to serve the Cabin John Citizen's Association as vice-president and treasurer for five years, and has been an integral part of the Crab Feast, the Cabin John Creek clean-up, the Potomac River Float event, the Ladies Literary Society book club, and a variety of other community events. She retires in June, and has decided to fulfill her lifelong dream of living in the Pacific Northwest, a place she came to treasure as a graduate student at the University of Washington. She will be moving to Seattle in June, to a community very similar to Cabin John, but without the intense development pressure that comes from being on a major commuter artery.

Helen, of course, has mixed feelings about leaving Cabin John. She'll miss getting on her bike and riding along the canal to sit on her favorite bench at Widewater, and the wonderful feeling she got at the end of a successful Crab Feast, despite the heat, long hours, and exhaustion. Her biggest concern, however, is how to preserve the community spirit which she has cherished and done so much to foster. Development pressures have been increasing exponentially since 1999, and Montgomery County is trying unsuccessfully to balance the conflicting demands of a population that has grown disproportionately to the size of government. She is worried that the quality of life in Cabin John is very low in the county's list of priorities, and there may not be the kind of resident involvement needed to preserve the community bonds and identity that make Cabin John such a wonderful place to live. Although Helen won't be here to see it happen, her hope is that Cabin John continues to thrive. —



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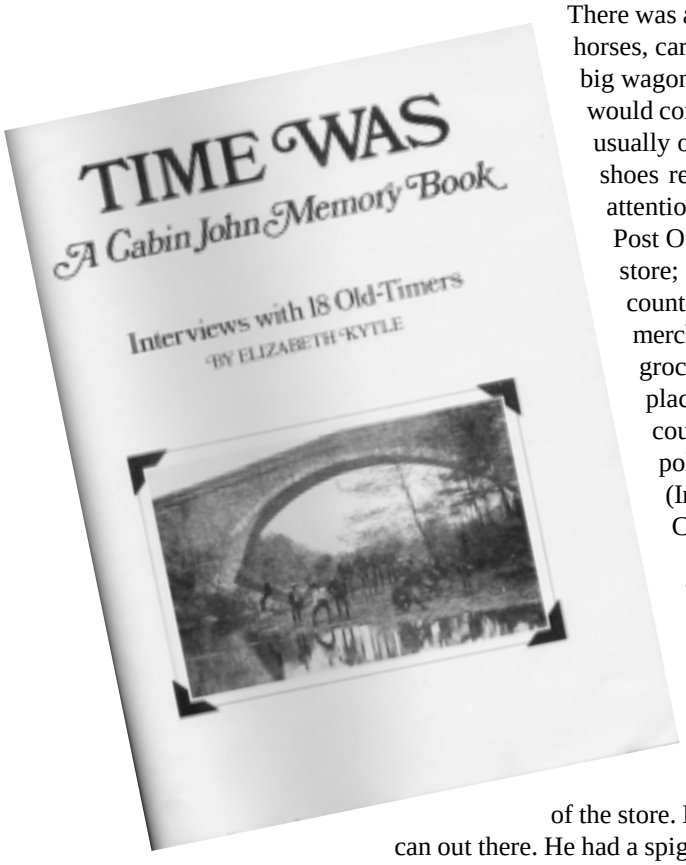
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Looking Back in Cabin John

by Andrew E. Rice

Memories of the Past

Regular readers of this column have doubtless noted that I have often made reference to *Time Was: A Cabin John Memory Book*, a 1976 collection of interviews by Elizabeth Kytle with Cabin John old-timers. Several people have asked if I could give the flavor of the book by actually reproducing some pieces of the interviews. So here are a few selections:



How Cabin John looked circa 1915: "There was a blacksmith's shop right at the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Seven Locks. There was a lot of traffic then – horses, carriages, wagons. A big wagon with four horses would come along and usually one of the horses' shoes required attention….There was a Post Office at Touhey's store; Touhey's was just a country store, general merchandise, small groceries. And it was a place where people could let off their political opinions." (Interview with Charles F. Smith)

"The first gasoline came to Cabin John when I was a kid. My grandfather got a 50-gallon drum and put it about 50 feet back of the store. He had a five gallon can out there. He 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…A big pie, an eight-inch pie, sold for a nickel." (Interview with Norman Touhey)

"We raised potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes. We had kale and corn. We made preserves and jellies and things like that and that helped out a whole lot in the winter. You prepared for winter. Now you don't have anything to prepare for winter with….We planted by the moon. Now, say for instance, if you were going to plant potatoes, you'd plant them in the dark of the moon because they stay down in the ground. If you plant them in the light of the moon they come to the top of the ground and they'll be green and won't be good to eat." (Interview with Mrs. Edward Jones)

On the C & O Canal earlier in the century: "[The canal boats] used to run night and day….They always had two teams of mules….They'd keep one team in the stable on the boat, and they kept one team out on the towpath pulling the boat….the tow lines were 65 yards long. They would pull four to six hours…. Between locks, the most important thing you had to know was where the best channel was, the deepest part. It wasn't all the same depth, so you had to memorize the whole canal….That memorizing the canal was really the hardest thing about boating." (Interview with Otho Swain)

On the Cabin John Bridge Hotel earlier in the century: "They had a terrific rathskeller covering almost the whole lower area, and they had many slot machines….This was legal in Maryland. They used to collect coins from the slot machines by the bucketful. And they didn't count it; they weighed it….The hotel was an enormous place; it really was….The main dining room was on the first floor…As you came in the door, there was a big round office – oh, as big as my whole house now….Down the hall was a great big men's room. And to the right of it was a bar that ran the whole length of the hotel. My father had 17 bartenders and 40 waiters." (Interview with William Bobinger)

"I worked at the Cabin John Bridge Hotel for many a year….I used to dip ice cream in the hotel's ice cream parlor [and]….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….I did shirts and things like that, the fancy clothes….I did clothes for all of them at the hotel. The Bobinger men used to have beautiful shirts." (Interview with Mrs. Matilda Bowles)

Thanks to all those who responded to the request in the last Village News for information about Cabin John t-shirts. We have nine different ones on hand and we'll be doing a feature on them in a summer issue of the paper.

CARDEROCK SPRINGS SWIM AND TENNIS CLUB HAS A LIMITED NUMBER OF MEMBERSHIP OPENINGS FOR THE 2006 SEASON.

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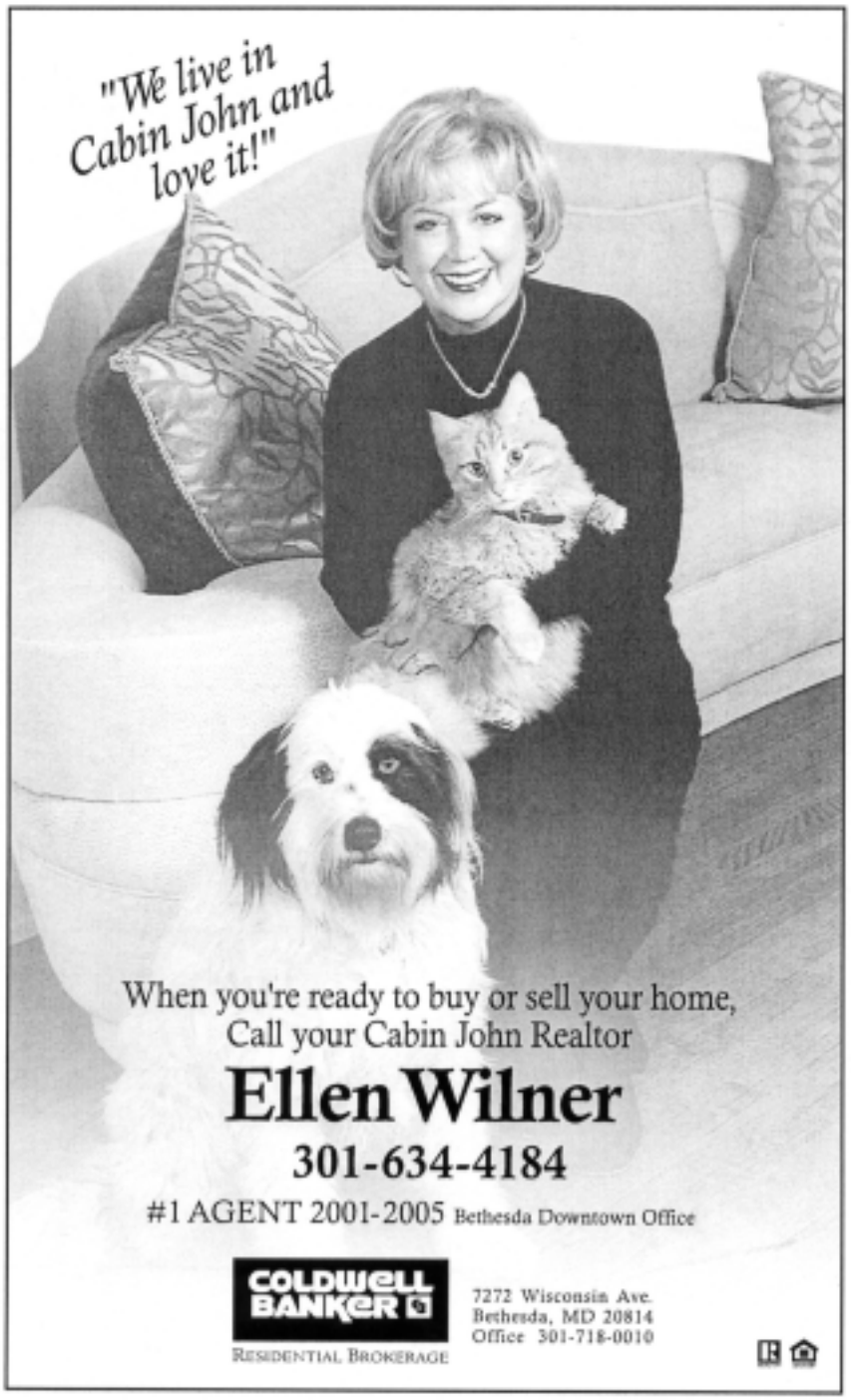
EACH WEEKLY SESSION WILL INCLUDE SEGMENTS OF TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES, TENNIS, SWIMMING AND FUN RELATED SKILL ENHANCING GAMES. BEGINNING ON JUNE (19TH) AND RUNNING (6) CONSECUTIVE WEEKS. EACH DAILY SESSION WILL RUN FROM 10:00AM TILL 3:00PM.

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DUMPSTER DAYS
cont. from page 5

- Used motor oil, hydraulic fluids
- Photographic chemicals
- Brake fluid and antifreeze
- Car batteries
- Oil-based paints (Latex paints are not hazardous waste)
- Fluorescent light tubes and bulbs
- Batteries containing nickel, cadmium, mercury, silver-oxide, lead or lithium. Alkaline batteries may be put in with regular trash.

Imporant Note: Times for dropping off hazardous materials will be limited to the following: Friday 9 am - 4 pm and Saturday from 9 am - noon. If you have any **leaking** containers of hazardous materials, we will ask you to transport directly to Westland Middle School Saturday between 10 am and 2 pm. (FYI - There is a special hazardous waste collection being held by Montgomery County at Westland Middle School on Saturday, June 17 from 10 - 2. This is where we will be transporting hazardous materials which we collect from CJ residents at the Clara Barton Community Center. The school is located at 5511 Massachusetts Ave - close to the Little Falls Library.)

Finally, it would be helpful, but not necessary, if you would solidify latex paint with kitty litter or paint hardener (we will have litter on-site for you if you are unable to do this beforehand). Please also separate oil paints and batteries from other hazardous materials.

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



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The next deadline is 10 am, Wednesday, June 14, for the issue mailing June 23.

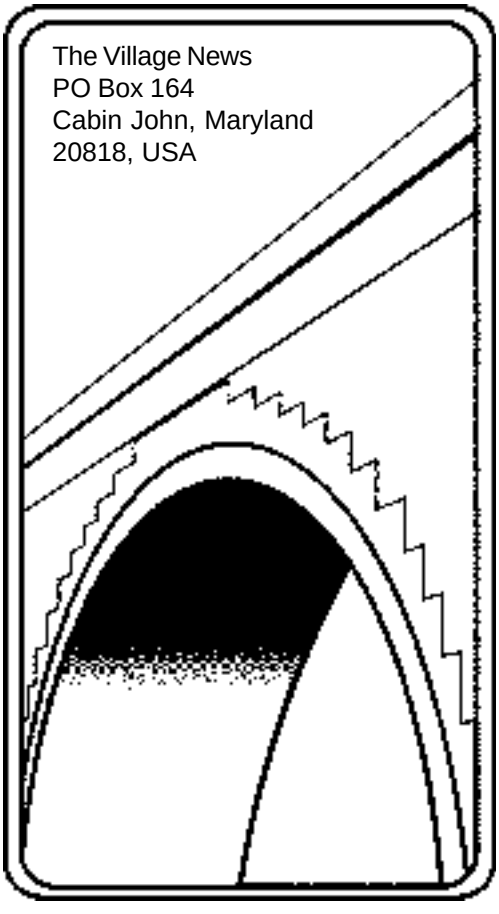
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