The Village News

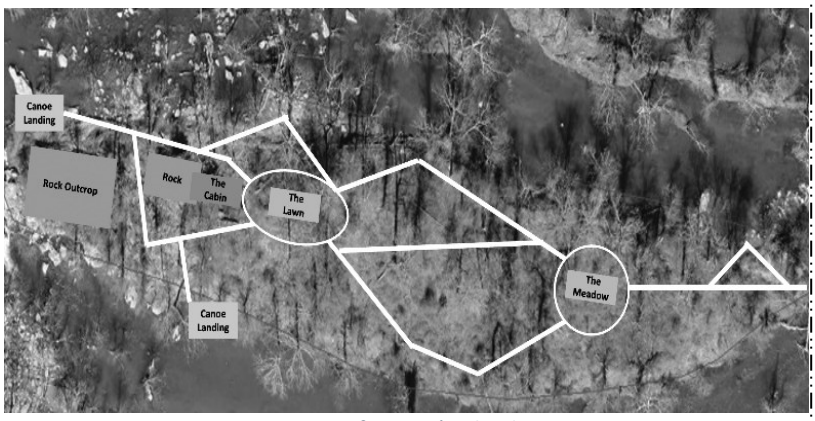
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF CABIN JOHN | APRIL 2024 | VOLUME 58 | ISSUE 04

What is Minnie's Island?

By Susan Roberts

It's not some far-off exotic island or a hair care product. It's just 100 yards off shore from Lockhouse 8 on the C&O Canal and is roughly eight acres of boulders, trees, plants, and wildlife. Accessible only by canoe, the island features a 30-foot by 15-foot wooden cabin with a large deck. In addition, Minnie's is home to many rare species of plants brought by frequent floods–wildflowers bloom in the spring, warblers sing in the towering trees and young mergansers hone their diving skills in the river.

See Minnie's on pg. 8



Map of Minnie's Island.



Annual Mulch Party for MacArthur Blvd Beautification

The annual mulch party—part of the MacArthur Boulevard Beautification Program—is planned for the morning of **Saturday, April 27** 8:30 am-noon. Meet us at 79th Street and MacArthur Boulevard (rain date Sunday, April 28).

See Annual Mulch on pg. 3

Preview of April CJCA meeting & Panel Discussions

By Charlotte Troup-Leighton

Curious About Construction Activity at First Agape/Gibson Grove and Scotland AME Zion Churches on Seven Locks?

Join us at our next CJCA Meeting on April 24 to learn more!

Scotland AME Zion Church, built by hand by Black congregants and opened in 1924, has literally been lifted off the ground and set down on its new waterproof foundation. The original wood-frame structure, one of the last of its kind in the region, was nearly destroyed by floods and intense storms over the last five years.

First Agape AME Zion Church at Gibson Grove, built in 1898 on land donated by Sarah Gibson, the founder of the African American community of Gibson Grove (also known as No. 10), was almost completely destroyed by a devastating fire on Ash Wednesday, 2004. Stormwater erosion, a felled tree, the close proximity of the Beltway, and other challenges have long thwarted restoration of this historic treasure.

See Churches on pg. 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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CJCA Updates

By Scott and Heidi Lewis

March Meeting Notes – CJCA held its monthly meeting at the CBNRC on Wednesday, March 20. In addition to the approval of February's meeting minutes, we had a fantastic slide show and update from the Minnie's Island Community Conservancy (see "What is Minnie's Island?" in this issue) and a discussion with the team that publishes the *Village News* (*VN*).

Did you know the *Village News* is published 10 times a year, and has been published since 1967? It is currently produced by editor **Shelly McKenzie**, layout editor **Joan Roskosh**, and business manager **Marcy Harrison**. Each edition of the *VN* takes well over 40 volunteer hours to produce, and annual costs for printing and mailing run $12,000-$13,000, with about 75% funded by the wonderful advertisers who support the paper; the balance is covered by CJCA dues. The *VN* has a slate of regular columnists who help provide content, but is always looking for writers, photographers, illustrators, a dedicated reporter to gather neighborhood news, and curious people who would like to interview the many interesting neighbors we have in Cabin John. Please reach out to editor Shelly McKenzie at **vneditorial@gmail.com** if you want to help out or just want to find out more.

The April CJCA meeting will feature a panel discussion with **Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins** of Scotland AME Zion Church; **Rev. Edgar S. Bankhead** of First Agape AME Zion Church at Gibson Grove; and **Rebeccah Ballo,** the Historic Preservation Supervisor for Montgomery County Planning. See the story on the front page for more information.

Call for Candidates–CJCA is a volunteer organization run by and for our community of 750 or so households, and it remains vital because so many Cabin Johners have stepped up to serve as officers for a year or two (or *slightly* more...). Cabin John keeps its small-town feeling because the CJ ethos is passed from old neighbor to new, and there is no better way to get to know the old timers and newcomers, the old ways and the new ideas, than to take on a role in CJCA. Anyone interested in becoming an officer (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer), or even vaguely curious about what each does, can email **cjcapresidents@gmail.com**. At the April CJCA meeting we will put forth the names of all who are willing to stand for office for the 2024-2025 term, with elections held at the May meeting.



ANNUAL MULCH CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

Mulch and some yard tools (e.g. rakes) will be provided for spreading, though you are encouraged to bring your own garden implements. We are looking for volunteers who can commit an hour or two. Please sign up at **https://forms.gle/vekPpG3PjCNP6fX69** or email **cjcapresidents@gmail.com** if you have questions.





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Contact: Thomas Manion, AIA





Renovations | Additions | New Homes

CHURCHES CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

Our special guests will share plans and progress for renovation of these cherished historic resources, both of which are part of Montgomery County's Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

CJCA looks forward to welcoming:

- **Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins** of Scotland AME Zion Church
- **Rev. Edgar S. Bankhead** of First Agape AME Zion Church at Gibson Grove
- **Rebeccah Ballo**, Historic Preservation Supervisor for Montgomery County Planning

April 24 at 7:30pm, Clara Barton Neighborhood Recreation Center (CBNRC)

All are welcome.

Please use the following link to join this meeting virtually if you are not able to attend in person:

https://meet.google.com/nkb-aphd-rgw

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Neighborly News

In Memoriam: Lois Jean Marginot

By Susan Shipp

Lois Marginot, a 67-year Cabin John resident, passed away peacefully January 18 in her home on 77th Street. The 91-year-old suffered from dementia, according to her son John Marginot, her caregiver in recent years.

Independent and resilient, Lois was known in the neighborhood for the pithy one-liners she would share as she strolled the streets of Cabin John. "Getting old is not for sissies," was a favorite.



Lois Marginot outside her house in 2021.

An ardent dog lover, Lois had numerous dogs over the decades, sometimes two or three. She was known to tell fellow dog walkers how she "loved dogs more than people." Lois also loved to garden and was most proud of her zinnias. She was a good athlete and she especially enjoyed tennis, basketball, and ping-pong. according to John.

Born November 15, 1933, in Philadelphia, Lois was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. John Andrews.

She was young when the family moved to Adams Morgan and then to Palisades in Washington DC. She worked as a secretary first at the Defense Mapping Agency in the 1950s and then for more than three decades at the David Taylor Model Basin in Carderock.

Lois moved to Cabin John in the mid-1950s with her husband Robert Marginot, who had family in Cabin John. They had two children, John and Sandy, who both graduated from Walt Whitman High School in the 1970s. Lois and Robert stayed married, but lived separately for some 20 years before Robert died in 1990 while on a business trip to Reno, Nevada.

In addition to her children, Lois is survived by a granddaughter and a great granddaughter.



Clara Barton Neighborhood Recreation Center

TINY LI'L CARNIVAL

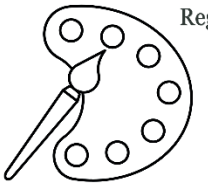
Petting zoo, face painting, moon bounce,
story time, ball pit, you name it!

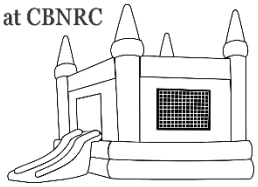
Saturday, May 11, 10:00 am–1:00 pm

Ages 5 and under, bring your own grownups

Must register to attend—Activity # R03002_361

Register or get more info at CBNRC





Get ready! ***GRATEFUL SHRED*** *is coming to CBNRC*
Collect those accumulating tax documents
and other papers
Bring to the center on
June 1, 9:00 am–noon
$5.00 per box
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Rewilding the Potomac: The Return of the Shad

Local Nature

By Eric Dinerstein

If the previous month's article focused on the ecological harm caused by non-native, invasive crayfish, this column highlights an example of ecological remedy: rewilding through the return of a native, the American shad. Aside from being an ecological success story, the shad has a glorious role in American history. It was once one of the most abundant fish species in eastern North America and was even described as "the fish that fed the nation's founders." Adult shad are no minnows: they weigh between three and eight pounds, so George Washington might have split his order with John Adams.

An interesting aspect of the shad's biology is that it's an ocean-dwelling fish. They spend their life in the Atlantic before heading back to their spawning grounds among the rivers of the eastern seaboard. The term that biologists used to describe this behavior is "anadromous," a pattern characteristic of various species of salmon and eels and among lesser known fish that live in the oceans but return to breed in freshwater on the east and west coasts of the United States. Shad vary in what they do after they breed; in the northern part of their range—up to Canada—they will breed and return to the ocean and repeat this circuit of their life history several times before they die. But in the southern part of the range—from the Carolinas down to Florida—shad breed once when they return to their spawning grounds, and that's the end of the story.

The name shad comes from "sceadd," the old English term for herring. The shad is indeed a form of herring and, like the common herring, it used to be abundant in the Potomac. But with overfishing, along with increasing pollution and sedimentation during the 20th century, shad all but disappeared from the Potomac and many other East Coast rivers. The rewilding of the Potomac, you could say, began around 1982 when a moratorium on harvesting shad from the river was enacted and an effort to reduce pollution and improve water quality began in earnest. But the numbers of American shad in the river still remained low. Sometime thereafter the Interstate Commission of the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB) stepped in and, beginning in 1995, inaugurated a program to restock American shad. The trick was to release fingerling shad in strategic locations in the river, thereby allowing them to imprint to their historic spawning and nursery waters and help stocks reestablish themselves. Each spring, as adult shad returned from the ocean to the Potomac River, ICPRB teams collected eggs and fertilized shad roe to be raised in fish hatcheries. The released fingerlings in the Potomac were carefully monitored, and the survival rate of each year's class was recorded in the sampling surveys for juvenile shad. By stocking with fingerlings in the right places, the numbers of shad rose rapidly.

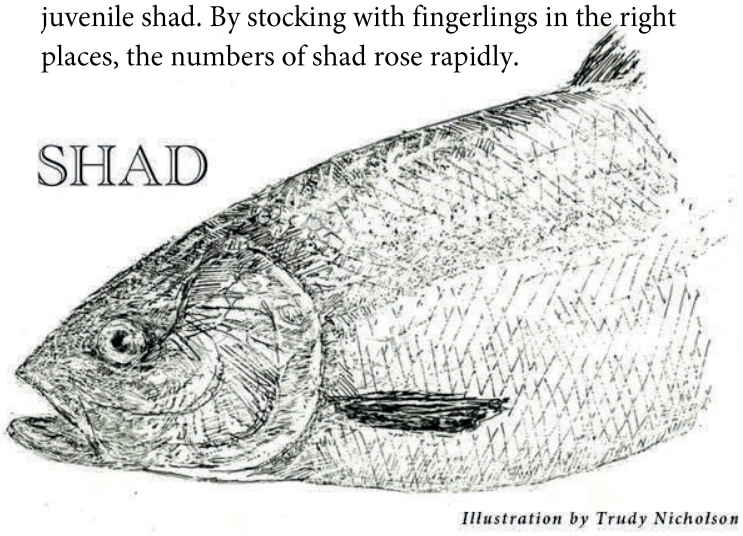


Illustration by Trudy Nicholson

Great story so far, but only half complete. The migratory shad, eager to return further up river and find historic spawning areas, met a roadblock in the form of the Little Falls Dam located between Locks 5 and 6. While a fishway was under construction to assist the adult shad to maneuver upstream beyond the dam, stocking continued and then extended after the fishway was opened; the annual additions of more fingerlings helped propel the shad's recovery even more. By 2014, when the project ended, the American shad was home again in our area, thriving in the Potomac. An even more encouraging footnote is that since 2002, Potomac shad have become what biologists term a "source population" for eggs to boost restoration efforts in other river systems where recovery has been slower than in the Potomac. These include several other streams in Maryland, the Rappahannock River in Virginia, the Susquehanna River in Maryland and Pennsylvania, and some of Delaware's rivers.

The process of "rewilding" requires source populations, safe, expanding populations that allow high recruitment to jump-start new satellite populations within the former range. It's the same process of first finding a stable population from which to recruit candidates to repopulate a depleted area that is driving the restoration of black rhinos and white rhinos in Africa, although moving rhinos is a bit more of a logistics issue than catching and shipping around shad fingerlings. The principle and the inspiration are the same, though: to right ecological wrongs and restore ecological systems with the species that once defined them before our species decimated those populations.

Let's hope humans can learn lessons of restoration from the natural world. If in 2024 the effects of the recovery of shad can somehow wash downstream to the seat of government, and help us recover our democratic traditions, that would be a restoration that would affect not just the Potomac, but the future of life on Earth.







Real Estate Activity in Cabin John

April 2024

Courtesy of Cabin John Realtor Rachelle Cherol

ACTIVE

6517 79th Street
List Price $3,790,000
6 BR, 6.5 BA, 2 GAR, 5,865 sq. ft.

6628 81st Street
List Price $3,699,000
5 BR, 5.5+ BA, 2 GAR, 7,465 sq. ft.

PENDING

7711 Macarthur Blvd.
List Price $1,895,000
6 BR, 5.5 BA, 2 GAR, 4,724 sq. ft.

8017 Cypress Grove Lane
List Price $1,495,000
5 BR, 3.5 BA, 2 GAR, 3,040 sq. ft.

CLOSED

6512 Seven Locks Road
Closed Price $2,500,000
5BR, 5.5 BA, 2 GAR, 4,751 sq. ft.

6519 76th Street
Closed Price $1,512,000
4 BR, 3 BA, 2 GAR, 2,626 sq. ft.

7 Russell Rd.
Closed Price $536,250
3 BR, 1 BA, 0 GAR, 1,196 sq. ft.

5 Ericsson Rd.
Closed Price $720,000
2 BR, 1 BA, 0 GAR, 832 sq. ft.

MINNIE'S CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

The beginning of modern time for the island was 1904 when John Trammell and Minnie Jenkins staked a claim on the island. It served as a vacation property for them and then changed hands several times before it was donated in 1994 to the Potomac Conservancy by the owners at the time– Margaret Ruess and Bobbi Miller. In 2021, it was donated by the Potomac Conservancy to Minnie's Island Community Conservancy (MICC). MICC's vision is to engage the community in making the island an inviting, accessible, and safe environment for nature-based recreation, social connection, education, conservation, and scientific research.

As this is a relatively new resource, MICC is actively considering uses and next steps.

Ideas include nature walks, volunteer activities days, organized youth camping for groups fewer than 20, sponsored Eagle Scout/Gold Award and SSL projects, arts and wellness-related day trips, and engagement with Washington Biologists' Field Club.

CJCA and MICC are planning an open house later this year with plenty of volunteer canoe ferrymen to help everyone in the community reach Minnie's for a visit. In the meantime, to learn more, please visit MICC's website at **https://www.minniesisland.org**.



The cabin on Minnie's Island was recently refurbished by conservancy volunteers.



Minnie's Island Community Conservancy

MINNIE'S ISLAND GUEST BOOK

(BY CABIN FRONT DOOR)

Paddle up. Be counted.

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Retro Reporter

By Heidi Lewis

By 1970 the ***Village News*** (***VN***) had been in publication for three years, though no issues from 1969* are in the digital archive (**cabinjohn.org/index.php/village-news**). The first issue from 1970 available in the archive is July 1970, which had a front page notice that is the first mention in the *VN* of something still near and dear to Cabin Johners:

> *"Home Study is having a fabulous CRAB AND CHICKEN FEST on July 25 from 5 to 8 pm. The place is Bill White's house at 21 Carver Road, and you can either eat your food there, or take it home to enjoy. The price is $2.50 per adult and $1 for youngsters over 10. The proceeds from this meal will go toward sending 44 Cabin John children to camp this summer."*

In inflation-adjusted dollars, the 2024 advance cost of a chicken meal ($18) is actually less than the 1970 cost, while the crab meal ($20) is exactly the same price. Score one for CJCA holding the line on prices!

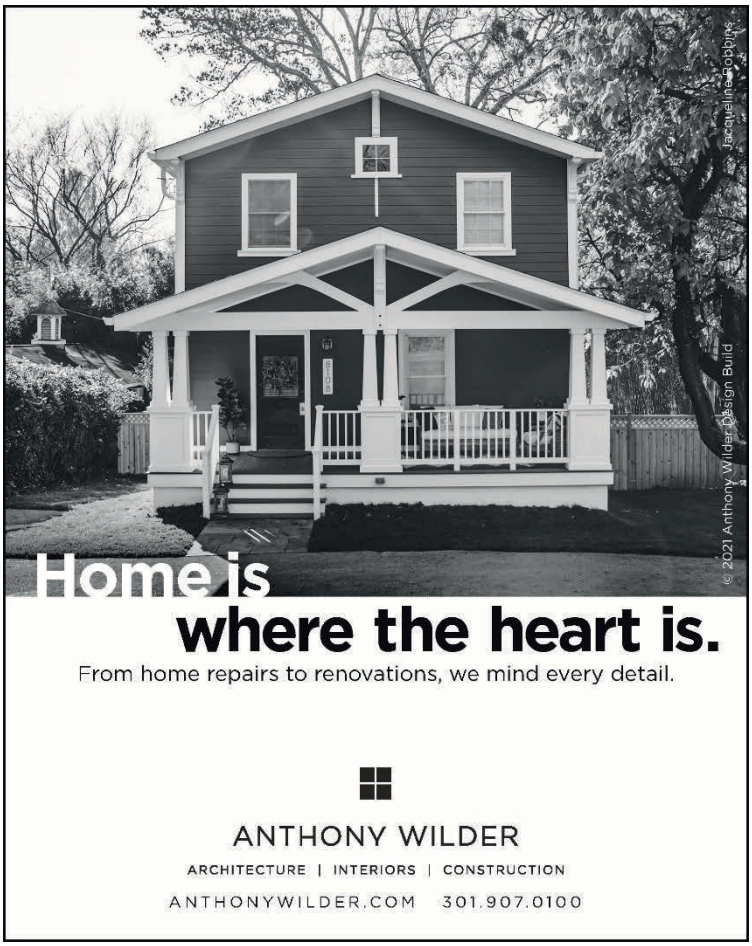
The September 1970 issue had a notice that directly mentioned rising food prices:

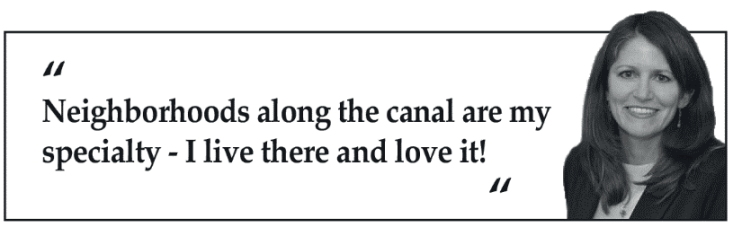
> *"A big WELCOME BACK to all students and teachers at Clara Barton. We know this year will be an exciting and successful one for everyone. As in the past two years, there will be a Friday Memo from Mr. Kaplan this year. It will be sent home with the youngest child so please remember to get it from him. The Friday Memo contains current information about goings-on at Clara Barton including the next week's school lunch menus. Please understand that due to rising food prices, the type A hot lunch will now cost 45¢, milk will be 4¢. Soon, a 15¢ breakfast program will be started. If you don't have time or if it is difficult for you to fix a good breakfast in the morning, please let Mr. Kaplan know. Studies have shown that children with full tummies work better at school."*

We may feel like food prices are rising today, but when considering inflation-adjusted dollars, the current cost of a MoCo elementary school lunch ($2.55) is less than the cost back in 1970 ($3.60 inflation-adjusted; maybe our memory of dollar amounts is not terribly helpful in evaluating whether real costs are actually higher than they used to be?).

Clara Barton School welcomed students for the 43rd year that September, having opened at its current location in 1928. Perhaps some at the Board of Education already knew but the staff, students, and parents probably had no idea the school would be closed just four years later.

*If during your spring cleaning you come across any issues from 1969, please let us know–**cjcapresidents@gmail.com**.





POEMS FOR PASSERSBY

APRIL WALK

—Jane Kenyon

Evening came, and work was done.
We went for a walk to see
what winter had exacted
from our swimming place on the pond.

The moss was immoderately green,
and spongy underfoot; stepping on it seemed
a breach of etiquette.
We found our picnic table
sitting squarely in the bog—only
a minor prank. The slender birches watched us
leaning from the bank.

And where the river launches forth
from the south end of the pond
the water coursed high and clear
under the little bridge.
Huge, suspended in the surge, grand-
father turtle moved sporadically
one flat, prehistoric, clawed arm
at a time, keeping his head downstream.

Years ago he made a vow
not to be agitated by the runnels
of spring, the abundance of light,
warm wind smelling of rain,
or the peepers' throstling….

We watched till he was out of sight
and seemed illusory, then turned
toward home—the windows
brazen in the setting sun….



Pausing on a bright spring morning to read a poem is Nancy Shaw of Tomlinson Avenue. Poems, posted weekly, can be enjoyed in all seasons on upper 78th Street.



Illustration by Trudy Nicholson

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SUBSTITUTE TEACHER OPPORTUNITIES

The Clara Barton Center for Children located at 7425 MacArthur Boulevard has immediate openings for substitute teachers. If you are at least 18 years old, have a lot of energy and enjoy working with children, contact **Paula Curran** at **paula.curran@clarabartoncenter.org** or **301-320-4565.**

Hours are flexible. This is a perfect opportunity for older adults, parents, college students or anyone who enjoys spending time in a joyful environment with a group of professional teachers and wonderful and inquisitive children!

DID YOU KNOW?

To prepare for a home inspection, a buyer should follow these steps:

1. Join the inspector during the evaluation—attend the inspection to ask questions, seek clarification and understand the issues the inspector identifies.
2. Review the inspection report and pay attention to any major issues, safety concerns, and potential repairs needed.
3. Prioritize essential repairs that may impact the safety and habitability of the home and plan for future maintenance.
4. Be prepared for unforeseen issues and be flexible.

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The Village News is a monthly newsletter published by the Cabin John Citizens Association. Ten issues are published a year and mailed free to every household in Cabin John. Others may subscribe for $12 per year. Send news, articles, and letters to: VNeditorial@gmail.com. Send advertising inquiries and subscription requests to: VNbusinessmanager@gmail.com. You can contact *The Village News* by mail at Village News, P.O. Box 31, Cabin John, MD 20818.

Volunteers who make *The Village News* possible: **Shelly McKenzie**, editor; **Joan Roskosh**, layout; **Marcy Harrison**, business manager.

Regular contributors: Sarah Cahill, Sarah Craven, Eric Dinerstein, Burr Gray, Charlotte Troup-Leighton, Heidi Lewis, Scott Lewis, and Susan Shipp.

Illustrations: Trudy Nicholson

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE:
5 pm, May 25, 2024
CJCA, P.O. Box 31, Cabin John, MD 20818

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at
CLARA BARTON NEIGHBORHOOD RECREATION CENTER

April 20
Weed Warrior Workday
10:00 am to Noon
(Clara Barton Field: 7401 MacArthur Blvd.

April 24
CJCA Meeting, **7:30 pm**

April 27
Annual CJ Mulch Party
8:30 am-Noon.
Meet at 79th St. & MacArthur Blvd.

May 5
CJ Blood Drive
10:00 am to 3:00 pm

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