



March 2013

Barcroft News

Vol 110, Issue 7

Teen Gardener Planning Now for Spring Tour ...

By Inge Nealis

We really enjoyed the Barcroft Garden Tour last year on May 20, 2012. This garden tour inspired my brother and me to become a part of this great group.

Soon after looking at these beautiful gardens around the neighborhood we decided we should start our own. We built raised garden beds in our front yard and planted the seeds for fruits, flowers and vegetables. We had many flowers such as red velvet queen sunflowers, marigolds, zinnias, dwarf sunflowers, and lavender. All of these wonderful flowers we started from seed and they all did so amazing.

For example, we didn't just have marigolds, we had a marigold hedge. These flowers really gave lots of great color to our garden.

We also raised several fruits and vegetables such as cantaloupes, tomatoes, beets, radishes, turnip tops, oregano, pumpkins, chives, chamomile, and colorful peppers. Our pumpkin flower we found in our compost. We transplanted it to one of our raised beds and it produced 10 pumpkins!

We watered all our plants by using our two rain barrels. Then we decided we wanted to try a winter garden so we made a small green house, which currently houses lavender, oregano, and chives. We also made cold frames; we are currently growing Swiss chard which is doing great. We created some additional winter interest by adding some colorful decorations to keep our garden looking great throughout the winter.

Since we decided that we want to be on the garden tour this year, we thought we should get a head start. We are currently growing basil, garlic chives, anise, tomatoes, and radishes indoors. Once the weather gets warmer, we will transplant our plants outside in the raised beds.

We hope our garden will be as successful this year as it was last year! Can't wait to see you this year on the garden tour! ●

It's Time To Renew for BSCL!

Dues are \$5 per individual/\$10 per family. Drop off at the community house with membership form (www.bscl.org/memform.pdf) or mail to Fay Cheung, Membership Secretary, at 618 S Taylor St.

Barcroft News

Editor/Advertising: Elizabeth Kiker
202-425-0627
editor@bsclorg

Publisher/Mailing: Linda Webb,
linda@bscl.org
703-969-6373

Next Deadline Mar. 15th

BSCL Officers

President Pat Williamson
PWilliamson@weta.org

Vice President Eric Harold
Eric@bscl.org

Treasurer Jennifer Lis
Jennifer@bscl.org

Membership Secy. Fay Cheung,
fay@bscl.org

Board Members Mike Behringer, Jim
Kerr, Bryant Monroe

Contacts and Committees

Community House Rental Manager:
Barbara Swart
barcrofthouserental
@yahoo.com

Restoration: David Michaelson,
Jim Kerr

Fundraising: Chris Ditta

Landscaping: Scott Brinitzer
703-892-0308

Traffic Committee: Heidi Wicker

4th of July Parade: Andrew Hunter
703-979-8247

Columbia Pike: Randy Swart
randy@bscl.org

Demeter House: Darlene Mickey
Parks: Elizabeth Kiker,
Shirley Gay

Signs: Ken Edwards

Web/NCAC Rep Randy Swart
703-521-2080

Arlington Civic Fed. Delegates: Eric Harold, Randy Swart, Pat Williamson, Jim Kerr
Alternates: Karen Darnier, David Michelson, Elaine Squeri, Mark Wigfield
Barcroft News is printed on recycled paper with vegetable-based ink by Stanley Adams Printing.

Visit Us Online: www.bscl.org

Monthly Happenings

President's Report by Pat Williamson

Many Barcroft neighbors expressed questions and concerns about the 2013 Real Estate Assessments received in late January. We will devote our **March 7 monthly meeting** to this subject. Arlington County Department of Real Estate Assessments staff will present a program on the process of real estate assessments. The meeting will be **at 7:30 p.m.** at the **Community House**. The deadline will have passed for appealing directly to the assessments office, but appeals can be sent to the Board of Equalization until April 15.

Many neighbors turned out to discourse on recent power outages with Dominion Power and Arlington County staff at the February meeting. Randy Swart is following up with them on the status of the abandoned VEPCO site on S. Pershing Drive and on the path our power lines take through the woods. We believe we now have their attention and will hope to have better communications during future outages.

The BSCL has maintained our position that no new use permit changes should be granted to El Salvador and the new El Tutumaso restaurants along Columbia Pike. Both are still asking the County Board to grant them permit changes that will allow live music and dancing until 2am. We will keep you updated through the bsclchat.

Elections will be held in May for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and one Executive Board Committee seat. Please consider nominating yourself or another Barcrofter for office! •

Did You Just Hear a Scream? Barcroft's Novelist Did

By Bill Schweigart

What is it that screams so, down there in the dark hollow of Four Mile Run?

In my upcoming novel, *The Beast of Barcroft*, something is stalking our neighborhood. When Ben McKelvie survives an inexplicable attack in his own backyard, he seeks the help of zoologist Lindsay Clark. Together, they discover the terrifying link behind the attacks, but knowing the beast and stopping it are two different animals. Did I mention it's loosely based on a true story?

But I'm getting ahead of myself. My name is Bill Schweigart and I'm your friendly neighborhood novelist. My first thriller, *Slipping The Cable*, was just published. It follows Kelly Sensor, the newest junior officer aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Sentinel, where a typical day at the office means lethal drug smugglers, treacherous storms, and dangers only the sea can conjure.

When Kelly runs afoul of his tyrannical captain, Aregood, shipboard life truly becomes deadly. After their battle of wills puts Sentinel on a collision course with disaster, Kelly hopes to escape to Key West, but paradise quickly becomes a dead end when Aregood pursues him.

I tend to write about places I love (like Key West) and when I moved to Barcroft, I immediately fell in love with the network of trails and the thin vein of wilderness

along Four Mile Run. Then I stumbled upon the true story of "The Beast of Barcroft."

The question "what is it that screams so" is not a line from my novel, but a direct quote from a 1974 *Star-News* article. That summer, something terrorized the residents of Arlington. Over 20 pets were killed. Wild screeching filled the summer night.

The county even sought the help of the National Zoo to trap the culprit. Ultimately, the blame was hung on an African civet cat, but in my forthcoming novel, the beast will be considerably more terrifying than an exotic pet that ran loose and it won't limit its victims to cats and dogs.

For thrills until then, I hope you'll pick up *Slipping The Cable* on Amazon.com, or better yet, buy one in person at Barnes & Noble's Seven Corners location on March 16, when they'll be hosting me for an author chat from 1 p.m. - 3 pm. Come say hello!

Oh, and watch your back out there on the trails. •

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Freezable Frogs & Salamander Congresses

By Cliff Fairweather, Park Naturalist, Long Branch Nature Center

This is the breeding season for a couple of tough local amphibians. One passes the winter, along with most of the year, underground while the other endures freezing weather as a virtual ice cube. Both make a migration to temporary wetlands (vernal pools) to mate and lay eggs.

The spectacular spotted salamander sports blue-black skin spangled with yellow spots and can reach up ten inches in length. The adults live underground most of the year in wooded areas near a vernal pool. They feed on insects, worms and other invertebrates and are rarely seen on the surface. Wood frogs are medium sized frogs that spend their adult lives in the woods hunting for insects and other invertebrates. As winter approaches they take cover under fallen leaves, digging just a little below the surface. Up to forty-percent of their body can freeze without ill effects because they produce their own anti-freeze that prevents formation of ice crystals within their cells. While frozen, the frogs have no respiration, heart beat or brain activity, yet within a day of thawing out they are ready to breed. Both of these amphibians migrate to vernal pools for a few days of mass mating and egg laying, usually in late February or early March in our area. Spotted salamanders move into

the pools with the first warmish late winter rains to form nighttime mating aggregations called congresses. Wood frogs migrate around the same time, with males arriving at the pools first to give their quack-like call while floating on the surface. Responding females arrive soon and a frenzy of mating ensues over the next few days and nights.

Wood frog and spotted salamander young have little time to hatch from their eggs and develop into land-living forms. The pools dry out by the end of May, or much earlier. This makes them an uncertain nursery but also one that is free of fish that would eat eggs and young. These amphibians have far better breeding success in these ephemeral wetlands than in other habitats.

Both Long Branch and Gulf Branch Nature Centers have vernal pools with wood frog and spotted salamander populations. Check the spring *Snag* for programs related to these habitats and the amphibians that use them. •



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Become an ACE:Volunteer to Help Clean Arlington

By Elenor Hodges, ACE Executive Director

Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment needs you! We depend strongly on the more than 600 volunteers who contribute to every aspect of ACE's work. To learn more about these opportunities, call 703-228-6427 or email elenor@arlingtonenvironment.org.

Arlington Energy Masters Drop In Volunteers

Arlington Energy Masters volunteers take part in monthly work days to improve energy efficiency in affordable housing apartments. Volunteers will visit tenants to collect information ahead of work crews, assist with supply organization, and serve as runners. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old.

The next workday is Saturday, March 2 and there are two shifts: 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 12 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can sign up today

at arlingtonenvironment.org. Future work days include April 6, May 18 and June 8.

35th Anniversary Planning Committee

ACE is celebrating 35 years of protecting Arlington's open spaces, air and water. Join our committee planning events to celebrate.

Office Volunteers

ACE is seeking office volunteers to assist with mailings, data entry and other administrative tasks. This position is typically two hours every other week. Training is available.

Newsletter Writers/Editors

ACE has volunteer positions open for contributors to our print newsletter, *Arlington Environment*, and our regular e-newsletter. ●

Arlington Forest United Methodist Church

Where Love Changes People's Lives through Engaging Worship, Learning Together, and Serving Others

Morning Prayer during Holy Week 3/25-3/30, 6 a.m.

Holy Thursday Communion 3/28, 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday Service, 3/29, 12 noon

Easter Worship, 8:30 & 11, Pot Luck Breakfast 9:30-11

Community Easter Egg Hunt, Sun. 4/7 12:30p.m., Home of Lily the Bunny

Come to worship at 11 a.m. and then stay for the Hunt!

Chesterbrook Montessori School now enrolling.

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4701 Arlington Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22203 703/525-0961



A Better Future ... Requires Construction Now

**By Arlington County Department of
Environmental Services Staff**

Beginning the week of February 18, the County will replace an 80 year old, 8-inch water main along Columbia Pike. The main has failed several times over the past year, resulting in emergency repairs and traffic disruptions. This replacement project is expected to take approximately 40 days to complete.

Contractor crews will begin work in the center of Columbia Pike from S. Wakefield St. to just beyond S. Taylor St. At least one lane of traffic in each direction will remain open during the project.

The hours of operation for this project will be 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday - Friday.

Please note that the main replacement could potentially be delayed, pending any water emergencies requiring immediate attention. The water main replacement project is part of Arlington County's ongoing maintenance program and efforts to renew its aging infrastructure.

Additionally, the newer main will be relocated to avoid any potential conflicts with the future Streetcar development. If you have questions regarding this project, please contact Marlee Franzen at 703-228-6495. •



Want to make a connection with God?

St. John's Episcopal Church is a vibrant congregation with a big heart. We believe that questioning and doubts are part of mature faith development. Always inclusive, we invite you to bring those questions inside the faith community where we help people establish a deeper relationship with God.

-Reverend Ann Barker, Rector

Sunday Worship Services

8 am and 10 am

Sunday Christian Education

Adults 9 am - Youth 9:15 am

All are welcome to all services and activities!

Tues. Mar. 5 Book Club - *Beyond the Beautiful Forever* by Katherine Boo
Sun. Mar. 24 Holy Eucharist and Blessing of the Palms - at 8 am and 10 am
Thurs. Mar. 28 Loaves & Fishes Meal & Service - 6:30 to 8 pm
Fri. Mar. 29 Good Friday Services - 12 noon and 7 pm
Sun. Mar. 31 Easter Holy Eucharist - 8 am
Easter Festive Holy Eucharist with children's message - 10 am
Easter Egg Hunt and reception after the 10 am service

St. John's Episcopal Church

415 S. Lexington Street Arlington, VA 22204 703-671-6834 stjohnsarlingtonva.org



Power Outage Powwow & Brainstorm

By Randy Swart

Our February BSCL meeting was very useful for venting some problems during recent storm recovery. But it was even more useful for bringing us two Dominion staffers who could handle other problems as well.

Somehow President Pat persuaded Dominion to send Tony Savage, Operations Manager for all of Dominion's network inside the beltway, and extending down to Lorton. He was the highest level Dominion operations person I have ever encountered at a meeting.

After the meeting we talked about how Barcroft had noted that in the last two big storms our neighborhood-wide outage has persisted long after they had already resolved other neighborhood's outages.

It may be related to the fact that our power comes up from the substation down on Four Mile Run Drive via a route through the park parallel to the high voltage lines. In both storms those lines were part of the problem, even though they did considerable tree trimming after the first storm.

We also apparently have a backbone along 6th St South that makes all of us vulnerable to trees coming down along there. Mr. Savage said he would have

his Reliability engineer take a look at our situation and see if he had any recommendations.

Who knows whether it will produce any action, but at least our concern got to the right person.

The second Dominion staffer there was Deborah Johnson, Manager of Regional State and Local Affairs.

It turned out that she was not familiar with the story of our old substation lot on Pershing Drive, where Dominion has not cleaned up the PCB pollution to the residential standard that the County insists on to buy the lot and add it to our park. She said she would look into the issues.

I doubt that she can resolve it, but at least that keeps the question active. ●



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The People in Barcroft ... Special Two-Family Edition

Compiled by Lisa Piantanida

Joe, Kerry, Connor and Quinn

Mutschelknaus, along with their two black labs Monty and Keswick, live on the corner of S. 8th Street and S. Wakefield Street. They moved into Barcroft during Hurricane Hanna in 2008.

A fascinating fun fact about the couple is that they have known each other since the first grade, back in 1987!

Their favorite part of living in Barcroft is the annual Fourth of July Parade.



Osman & Cathy Moreno, whose two daughters “grew up and flew the coop” have four rescue dogs, Camille, Benji, Damita (little lady) and Sheeba the Chihuahua. “Oh, and I almost forgot Lucas, the cat.”

They live on the 800 block of S. Buchanan Street, and have lived in the neighborhood for **39 years**. Their first home in Barcroft was the Columbia Park apartments for 6 years. They loved the neighborhood so much they moved two blocks up the street. Big move!

What language do we speak at home?

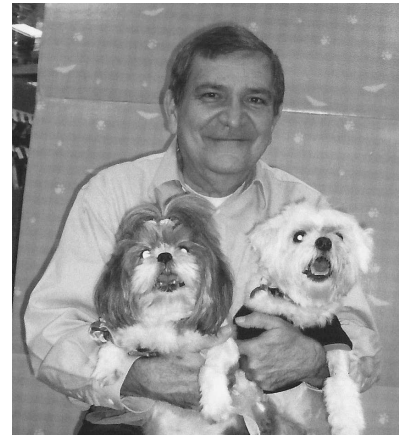
I don't know! My wife sometimes talks to me
Barcroft News

in English; I answer back in Spanish. Then we speak in Spanish and switch into English and back. We try to save time even as we speak.

Why do you love Barcroft? “Simple; it is home. I can't think of living anywhere else. I love the fact that as soon as you are off the main roads you feel like you are in a small village. I like walking in the evenings, it is so peaceful. We should all try it.

I still miss the old days; the houses with the big yards: Mrs. Robertson's on the corner of Bu-

chanan and 9th. Betty Handy on S. Buchanan with the guinea hands feeding on her yard. The neighbors on 8th st. with their roosters, hens, pigs, etc. •



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Barcroft Elementary: Trade Your Books at Barcroft!

By Jenny Ditta, Barcroft Elem. Liaison

Through March 1, all students are encouraged to participate in the annual Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser. During P.E. classes, participating students will jump rope and raise money to benefit the American Heart Association. On March 2, wish our three Odyssey of the Mind student teams good luck as they compete in the annual competition at West Potomac High School.

The school will host important visitors on March 5. Members of the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business and the Curry School of Education's Partnership for Leaders in Education (PLE) program will be visiting Barcroft along with leaders from the Lagos Nigeria State School System to learn more about Barcroft Elementary and its experience and success with the PLE program.

The PTA's annual Coffeehouse and Book Exchange will be held on the evening of March 5 between 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. All are welcome to join us for hot chocolate and coffee and to collect books for the home library. Drop off any books you don't read anymore, and pick up books that are new to you!

That same evening, the PTA will commemorate Arlington Public School's "Arts in the School" Month by hosting a special presentation by Art Teacher Marel Sitron during the PTA meeting and by displaying student art sub-

missions in the 2012-2013 PTA Reflections Art program.

On March 7, Barcroft will have a daytime and evening "Days and Nights of Leonardo" Open House and an evening African-American Heritage Celebration. Join us to explore the latest in student learning and to conclude our month-long celebration of African-American culture. The event will be from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. All are welcome.

Between March 8 to April 1, students will have a break from classes. Consistent with Barcroft's year-round "Modified School Year" schedule, Spring Intersession classes will be March 11 – 22. Students may take two weeks of classes or enjoy a break from school. All students will then enjoy Spring Break from March 25 - April 1. Classes resume on April 2.

To learn more about news at Barcroft, visit www.apsva.us/Page/13363, or like us at www.facebook.com/BarcroftElementary. •

Dancers Wanted

The Arlington House Victorian Dance Society is looking for dancers, particularly gentlemen and couples. We will teach you the dances, but being able to dance to a beat is important. We generally rehearse once a month. Period clothing is provided. To learn more, email amy_delery@nps.gov. •

Neighbor to Neighbor Ads

These ads are free to BSCL members.

The listings will be run for three months.

Yardwork and Gardening- Reliable gardening, mowing or house labor. Thomas Fontaine at 703-979-5838 or thomas.fontaine.12@gmail.com.

Barcroft Lawns: resident starting new lawn care company. Mowing and mulching to planting and pruning. Contact BarcroftLawns@gmail.com.

Pet Sitter + Mothers Helper: Emma Monroe, a 12 ½ year old. For more info, call 703-271-0944 or 703-919-3069.

Babysitter + Pet-sitter: Mia Field, 15.5 year old Wakefield sophomore, eager to sit. References. 703-946-7188 or mia.e.field@gmail.com

Alexandra's Babysitting - teen available nights and weekends. 703-892-6712

Rebekah's Pet Care (walking, feeding)
703-521-8756.

College-aged Babysitter - holidays and summers: Sarah. 703-521-8756

Baby-sitter + Pet-sitter + Vacation Help: 8th grader, Tyler LaPointe, 571-244-7555 or tyler-chanlapointe@gmail.com

Babysitter: Rebecca Bean is Red Cross Certified. Call 571-344-4134 or beccab50@gmail.com

Tutor Senior at Wakefield, I can tutor math (middle school to calculus), physics, and French. Bou at 703-909-5057 or aboudia9@gmail.com

Violin Teacher/Math Tutor: High school senior/musician, teaching beginner and intermediate violin. Also tutoring elementary/middle school math. Contact Austin at (571) 244-8102.

Vacation Help: Responsible teen to water plants, bring in mail, care for pets, mow lawn: Dylan Vega, 703-271-5987, dylanrvega@gmail.com

Baby items, books, toys, household items needed for Even Start Program at Barcroft. Kathleen Costar, kathleen_costar@apsva.us

Barcroft Community Playgroup 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Friday mornings at the Community House. Call Jason Kiker at 703-216-9728 for more information or just show up! •

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Housing Inventory Shortage Continues in the DC Metro housing area coming into 2013, and January saw the lowest supply level in 15 years based on the MRIS data records. Buyer demand is strong and interest rates are still attractive having inched up slightly (from 3.375% to 3.625% for fixed rate loans up to \$417,000) since the first of the year.

See the insert for details!

Looking to maximize value for your home? I can help you with advice on smart improvements! Here are just a few stats from the 2013 Cost vs. Value report. Nationwide, stabilized home values and decreased construction costs helped to improve remodeling market and costs decreased 1.9% overall. The central Atlantic region did better than the national average. For mid-range projects one of the most popular is the kitchen remodel.

In the DC area the average minor kitchen remodel had a job cost of \$18,608 with a resale value of \$16,799 at 90% cost recouped. The highest cost recouped in Washington DC was a wood deck addition at a job cost of \$9,455 and a resale value of \$10,282 = 108.7%. It is interesting that a composite deck addition yielded only an 87.5% return at an average cost of \$14,697 and a resale value of \$13,103. If you want a complete copy of this report let me know and I can mail, fax or email it to you!

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