

December 2014

# Barcroft News

Vol 112, Issue 4

## Barcroft Holiday Sing-Along on December 4

**By Barbara Swart**

Bring the kids to the traditional Barcroft Holiday Sing-Along on Thursday December 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the Community House. Please join us to sing holiday songs with the Barcroft holiday band and greet Santa. If you have any refreshments to share with neighbors, please



bring them and we'll fill up the table with lots of goodies.

If you would like to join the holiday band, please contact [barbara@bscl.org](mailto:barbara@bscl.org) for the rehearsal date and time.

Hope to see you there! •

## A Barcroft Story: The Ice House

**By Hank Biddle**

One of the pure joys of childhood was when school closed for the summer. Buddy, my best friend, and I would tune up our bicycles and pedal off to explore the woods and hills of Barcroft with, of course, Terry dog. There were several special places. Pedaling west on Columbia Pike we would stop at Taylor Street and look down the hill. At the bottom the Pike turned into an easy S shaped

curve before going up the other side. There was something interesting and spooky at the bottom of the hill.

Buddy and I would coast down and stop at the bottom to look at a strange scary place. It was a big building with large beams holding up a tin roof. All the beams seemed to leak water and were very dark. There was a loading platform where several pickup trucks

*Continued on page 10*

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# Appy Travels

**By Mark Wigfield**

Smartphone apps have taken some of the guesswork out of riding the bus on Columbia Pike or Arlington Boulevard and connecting to Metro. When is the next bus coming to my stop? Metro's Next Bus can tell you precisely, thanks to live GPS tracking. What's the best route? Google Maps has a pretty good transit navigator. Should I head to the Yellow or Orange line? Embark and Metro's Next Train tell you when the next train will be at Virginia Square or Pentagon City – and the Metro app keeps you apprised of any dreaded weekend service delays.

While I may not have as much experience as some using these apps on area transit since I usually bike to work in D.C. (and have given up on Metro on the weekend), I have been playing with them for a while and think I've found some of their strengths and weaknesses.

Next Bus, for example, has the best GPS tracking. But it doesn't include ART busses or provide routing. Google Maps provides routing and creative alternative routes – but its GPS bus tracking is hit-or-miss. The bottom line: if you don't need navigation or ART, use Next Bus. Otherwise, use Google Maps. The ART system's trip planner, by the way, sends you straight to Google Maps for routing.

Next Bus can help you solve one of the dilemmas for Yellow Line riders who transfer

**Continued on page 3**

# Ready to Shovel? Snow is coming!

**By Sharon Tope**

You can be part of Barcroft's Snow Brigade, clearing essential walkways to bus stops, the Community House, Barcroft School and other pedestrian destinations within the neighborhood. Most of our volunteers use their snow shovels, but we have two County snow blowers just for Barcroft. The County trains snow blower operators. Training should take no more than half an hour. All are welcome. Call Sharon Tope at 703-920-2567 or send her an email at [stope3@verizon.net](mailto:stope3@verizon.net) to volunteer.

The Brigade clears:

- Our Barcroft Community House walks, steps and our handicapped access ramp.
- Walks of those who can't do it for themselves. We don't draw fine points about why someone can or can't, or inquire about their physical abilities. If somebody requests, we shovel. We also clear off cars and driveways, including some who could likely afford a commercial service. They are all neighbors and nobody really abuses the offer.
- Major routes to our neighborhood school and metro bus service. •

## Appy Travels, *continued*

***Continued from page 2***

to Columbia Pike-bound busses: should I get off at Pentagon or Pentagon City? Each station has a different series of 16 busses, and choosing the wrong station can increase your wait time. If you can get a signal on your phone in the tunnel or type fast when crossing the river, Next Bus can let you know which station to use to minimize your wait for the bus. (Of course, you need to know the Metro-rail travel time and calculate how long it takes to get up the escalator and out of the station as well!)

***Important note:*** until the construction on Columbia Pike is complete and the east-bound bus stop at the Goodwill is re-

stored, use the Thomas St. stop for a Next Bus search. The temporary stop adjacent to the 7-11 isn't listed on the app, and using Columbus Street will leave out the G and X busses.

***And a cautionary note:*** until the rebuild of the overpass at Washington Blvd/ Columbia Pike is completed, 16 busses heading to Pentagon/Pentagon City will continue to get backed up in construction-mess traffic. That project won't be done for a while, so maybe I'll use Google Maps to see if the X or a bus to the Orange line works better. Actually, I'll just keep riding the bike until the roads freeze over.

Anyway, if you have any good tips on this topic, • share them on [bsclchat@yahoo](mailto:bsclchat@yahoo)

# Autumn News from Barcroft Elementary

**By Jenny Ditta, Barcroft Elementary Liaison**

Barcroft Elementary's students are well ensconced in second quarter learning and enjoying the cooler weather. October's Fall Intersession was a resounding success with over 300 students participating in the two-week enrichment program. Hispanic Heritage Month was commemorated with an afternoon celebration featuring food, music and dance performances on October 17. On Saturday, October 18 Barcroft families participated in Barcroft Elementary School Night at D.C. United, watching D.C. United play against the Chicago Fire at RFK Stadium. The school celebrated Halloween by hosting its annual Halloween Dance Party on Friday evening, October 24. A spooktacular time was had by all 700-plus attendees! On October 31, Barcroft's Principal, Colette Bounet -- dressed in a minion costume voted on by students -- handed out treats to hundreds of neighborhood trick-or-treaters.

On November 4, the Barcroft PTA hosted an Election Day Bake Sale that raised over \$1,500 for student programs. Thank you to all of our neighbors for your wonderful support! Thank you as well for all of the excess candy that you dropped off after Halloween. The PTA was able to donate pounds of candy and handmade cards to the Veteran's Hospital in Washington D.C. Our donations will be in-



cluded in thank you packages for an upcoming gala celebrating women veterans.

Discussions continued in November regarding Arlington Public Schools (APS) plans for addressing increasing enrollment in South Arlington, including a **potential addition at Barcroft Elementary School**. Under the current plan adopted by the School Board on November 6, if an elementary school is not built at the Thomas Jefferson (TJ) site, then Barcroft and Randolph Elementary Schools will be expanded by Fall 2018. Barcroft will grow from a school with a seating capacity of 460 (the school currently holds 540 students with a 10-room trailer/relocatable) to a school with a seating capacity of 725. The decision whether to build at the TJ site will be made sometime in January 2015.

**Barcroft Silver Diner Night** is Monday, December 1 at the Clarendon Silver Diner from 5 to 8 p.m. We hope that you can join us for a wonderful evening of food and fun! And on Thursday, December 11 the Barcroft Elementary **Winter Concert** will be held at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 7p.m., featuring performances from our 4th and 5th Grade Chorus, School Band and School Orchestra. Please join us!

Winter Break commences for Barcroft students on Wednesday, December 24. Have a safe and happy holiday season, and we'll see you again in January. ●

# Flavors of the Season: Cookies

*By Kari Hickman,*

*Virtualgoodyplate.blogspot.com*

Now is the wonderful time of family gatherings, holiday parties, goody plates, and don't forget cookies left out for Santa! This is one of my favorite "special occasion" cookie recipes - you may not automatically associate hazelnuts and lemon, but trust me, they are a cookie-exchange-winning combination. You can use store-bought or homemade lemon curd for the filling (it's easy to make - many recipes online.) Happy Celebrations to all!

## Hazelnut-Lemon Curd Kisses

*Makes 2 dozen*

1 cup all-purpose flour

3/4 cup hazelnuts, toasted

Pinch salt

8 T (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened

1/3 cup granulated sugar

1 large egg yolk

3/4 tsp vanilla extract

1/4 cup lemon curd

1/4 cup confectioners' sugar

1. **MAKE DOUGH:** Adjust oven racks to upper- and low-middle positions and heat oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Process flour, hazelnuts, and salt in food processor until finely ground. With electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat butter and granulated sugar until light and fluffy,

about 2 minutes. Add egg yolk and vanilla and mix until incorporated. Reduce speed to low, add flour mixture, and mix until just combined.

2. **SHAPE COOKIES:** Roll 1 tablespoon dough into 1-inch ball and place balls 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Using greased teaspoon measure, make indentation in center of each ball. Bake until just set, about 10 minutes.



3. **FILL COOKIES:** Remove cookies from oven and gently reinforce existing indentation with teaspoon measure. Using a small spoon or piping bag fitted with large star tip, fill each dimple with 1/2 teaspoon lemon curd. Bake again, rotating and switching sheets, until cookies are just beginning to brown around edges, 8 to 10 minutes. Cool 5 minutes on baking sheets, then transfer to wire rack to cool completely. Dust with confectioners' sugar. (Cookies can be stored in airtight container at room temperature for 2 • days.)

# The Quiet of Winter is the Time to Prune Trees

**By Debora Southwell**

With cold weather here and the leaves fallen, it seems clear that we, as Earth's primary caretakers, can settle in for a winter siesta from tree-related work. What an intoxicating idea: that we get a break from outdoor chores (shhhhhh! Let's not even whisper the word "shoveling"), at least until the first hint of spring emerges. But don't lock up the shed just yet. When it comes to the task of pruning your trees, winter is actually the ideal time. Why? Because the tree is dormant. Although it does still respire, drink, feed, and grow, it does so at a much slower rate, and that makes winter an optimal opportunity to prune.

Although nature is the No. 1 pruner —

over the course of the year our huge willow oak drops a small truckload of twigs and branches into our back yard — with people living in close proximity to one another and trees having to live beside manmade structures, trees can benefit from us helping nature with its pruning work. The primary reasons for pruning are to promote a tree's healthy structure for survival, to increase its safety level, and to fine tune its esthetic appeal.

So consider your trees this season. A worthwhile and local source for information on how and when to prune can be found on the Web at Casey Trees.org. Search for How-to Pruning Videos and Expert Tips. •

## Model General Assembly for High School Students

**By Markarius Nealis**

Is your child interested in learning more about politics? Then Model General Assembly (MGA) is the thing for them. MGA is a program that is offered by schools that helps give high school students the experience of what modern day politics are really like. There are all roles offered depending on your grade level. MGA also offers an opportunity for kids to take on leadership roles as they progress through high school. Your child can be a leader by taking true initiative and rewriting or drafting a new bill that they and several other peo-

ple support. This is a great way for kids to get a glimpse of what politics is like. Your child can also expand group skills and meet new friends. •



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# The Evergreen Advantage

**By Cliff Fairweather,  
Naturalist, Long Branch Nature Center**

As the last leaves slip off of deciduous trees and shrubs in late autumn any remaining green really stands out in the forest. Local evergreens, such as Virginia pine, eastern red cedar, and American holly, provide a visual break from the grays, blacks, and browns of our winter woods. Even in their winter prominence evergreens are clearly a minority among local vegetation.

Deciduous plants in our region drop their leaves because photosynthesis, the process by which plants produce their own food using chlorophyll, carbon dioxide, water, and sunlight, doesn't work in the short days and cold of winter. Indeed, those leaves could be a liability in winter because of water loss through leaf pores and the risk of broken branches from the weight of snow-covered leaves. Better to get rid of them!

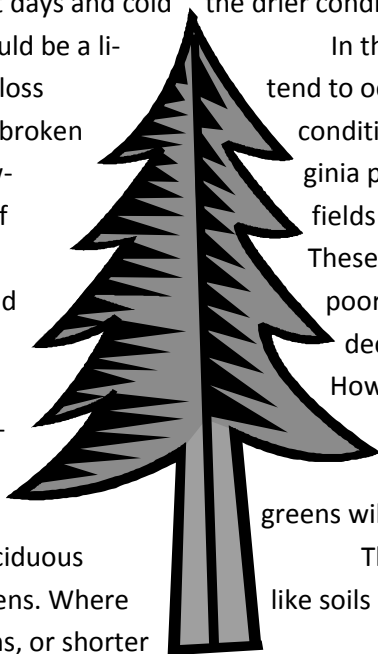
Losing leaves in the fall and growing new ones in the spring works well if the nutrients, water, and long growing season are available to do so. These conditions occur throughout most of our region, giving the fast growing deciduous plants an advantage over evergreens. Where nutrient poor soils, drier conditions, or shorter

growing seasons occur, however, the advantage moves to the evergreens and they can dominate.

What gives evergreens the advantage in these circumstances? They are masters of nutrient and water conservation and of cold resistance. They achieve this nutrient conservation through long-lived leaves or needles and by shedding just a few these at a time, continuously throughout the year. This means they don't need the huge amounts of nutrients and water necessary to grow a vast number of leaves all at once. Moreover, the leaves or needles of evergreens have waxy coverings that reduce water-loss in dry conditions, including the drier conditions of winter.

In the mid-Atlantic region, evergreens tend to occur in a few areas with favorable conditions. Eastern red cedar and Virginia pine are often pioneer trees in old fields almost anywhere in the region. These old fields often have nutrient-poor and dry conditions that most deciduous species find inhospitable. However, the evergreens will create conditions over time that favor deciduous plants and the evergreens will fade from the site.

The fast draining, sandy, desert-like soils of coastal barrier islands often



***Continued on page 9***



# Fall Seasons Greetings from Our Savior Lutheran School

## **By OSLS National Junior Honor Society**

A few weeks back, Our Savior students participated in our 5th annual A-SPAN walk to end homelessness in Arlington. A big thank you to all our neighbors and friends who supported us. We were able to raise over \$1,800 for A-SPAN.

Every month OSLS raises money for the school by hosting a Market Day pick-up site. Market Day is a ready-made meal company that delivers the frozen food directly to the school. Anyone from the community can place an order through [www.MarketDay.com](http://www.MarketDay.com) and pick it up on the monthly delivery date. All the items are frozen and they carry everything from appetizers to complete meals to desserts. Market Day is a great option for families on the go or singles who don't want to cook. Delivery to the school is usually the first Tuesday of the month, with the deadline to

order being the previous Wednesday. Check out the website for more information.

The children of Our Savior Lutheran School invite the neighborhood to their annual Christmas program on Wednesday, December 17. The students have been working hard on learning songs. The program — Hark, the Herald Angel! will be held at Our Savior Lutheran Church, located across the parking lot from our school, with performances at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. The event is free and everyone is welcome to enjoy this Christmas tradition as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Please join us at Our Savior Lutheran Church for Christmas worship services. We have Christmas Eve services on December 24 at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. There will also be a Christmas Day service on December 25 at 10 a.m. We would love to have you come and worship with us. •

## The Evergreen Advantage, *continued*

### ***Continued from page 8***

favor evergreens such as the low-growing beach heath and tall loblolly pines. Steep, dry, nutrient-poor slopes often host mountain laurel in abundance, such as the one directly opposite Long Branch Nature Center. In nearby mountains, dry, rocky ridges provide suitable habitat for pitch pine and Table Mountain pine. The highest elevations in the Appalachians are

both nutrient poor and have short growing seasons favorable to Fraser fir and red spruce.

Where different plants grow can be governed by many factors, but availability of nutrients, soil moisture, and the length of the growing season are key factors. The next time you come across a patch of evergreens, consider why • they are growing there and not deciduous plants.

# Barcroft Story, continued

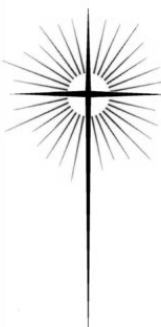
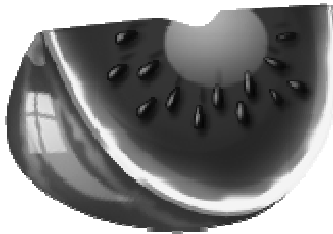
## Continued from page 1

were parked. Several big rough looking men wearing long black rubber aprons were bringing out blocks of ice loading the trucks. It was an ice house.

We had made friends with one man who let us have chips of ice to cool off after our bike ride. My mother on occasion would give me a dime and a big towel and send us off to the ice house. Not many people knew that they sold ice cold watermelons. We would ask our friend to find the biggest

watermelon they had and he always did. We wrapped it up covered with frost and ice and went home. Mom would cut it up and Buddy and I would sit on the back porch eating watermelon and seeing who could spit the seeds the furthest. That watermelon was the greatest.

**Editor's Note:** Hank Biddle was born in Washington D.C. and spent his early years in Arlington. He has spent more than 50 years in Barcroft. He is retired and now lectures at Northern Virginia Community Col- • lege.



## Celebrate the Birth of Christ With Us!

St. John's Episcopal Church is a vibrant congregation with a big heart. We are an inclusive and welcoming community of faith where everyone is supported in their spiritual growth and questions and discussion are always welcome.

- **The Reverend Ann Barker, Rector**

**Sunday Worship Services**  
8 am and 10 am

**Sunday Christian Education**  
Adults 9 am — Youth 9:30 am

**All are welcome to all services and activities!**

- |                    |               |   |
|--------------------|---------------|---|
| <b>December 14</b> | 10 am         | Children's Christmas Pageant at the 10 am service   |
| <b>December 21</b> | 6 pm          | Join in Christmas caroling in the neighborhood  |
| <b>December 24</b> | 5 pm<br>11 pm | Christmas Eve Service - special music and a children's message<br>Christmas Eve Service with carols |
| <b>December 25</b> | 10 am         | Christmas Day Service with carols   |
| <b>December 28</b> | 10 am         | Hear the Christmas story in Bible lessons and carols  |



## St. John's Episcopal Church

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



# Neighbor to Neighbor Listings

*These ads are free to BSCL members, and run on a space-available basis. The listings run for three months unless requested to be removed or updated.*

**Babysitter, Pet Sitter, Vacation Help:** Responsible 9th grader. Will water plants, bring in mail, etc. Email Tyler at tylerchalapointe@gmail.com or call 571-244-7555.

**4Sunsets Beach House:** White sand, gulf front home, 14 hour drive from Arlington or fly into Panama City, Florida. Visit 4Sunsets.com or email Alissa at alissa @4Sunsets.com.

**Babysitter:** Experienced, Red Cross certified 8th grader. Call Liza Harold at 703-868-3518.

**August's Pet Sitting:** Responsible high school freshmen available to care for pets. 703-892-6712.

**Neighborhood college student:** Available for babysitting, odd jobs, cleaning, housework, etc. anytime. Abby Fram, 703-892-1090 email: abbyfram94@aol.com.

**Babysitter, house/pet sitter:** Carmen Dunlap, responsible 16 year old. Available weekends and weeknights. Dunlap.carmen@ymail.com.

**Rebecca Bean Babysitter:** 10th grader available nights and weekends. Email: rebeccaahbean@gmail.com or call 571-344-4134.

**Jenny's Babysitting, Pet Sitting and Vacation Care:** Sixteen-year-old available weekends and some weeknights. Can water plants, bring in mail, etc., while you travel. Contact jennyclaire@gmail.com or call 703-998-5338.

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**Looking for In-home Child Care or a Nanny Share:** My husband and I are new to the neighborhood and expecting our first child in March! We are looking for in-home child care or a nanny share starting in the June time frame. We would love to hear from you. Jaime and Girair. Email: Jaimeuss@hotmail.com.

**Babysitter/Pet Sitter:** Neighborhood Wakefield Senior, 18, available for most evenings and weekends. Has her own car; can help with drop off and pick up for evening activities as



Barcroft School and Civic League  
800 South Buchanan Street  
Arlington, VA 22204

### **Nova Market Trends**

Here are some trends in October for the Northern Virginia market (city of Alexandria and Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties). Homes across the region are selling in about 54 days on average. In Arlington County, the average days on market (DOM) was 43 days, followed by Alexandria City – DOM – 53, Fairfax County – 55 - DOM. Prince William and Loudoun counties were at 54 days and 55 days, respectively.

The number of units sold in the Northern Virginia region decreased about 4% on average. Arlington County experienced a 14.34% decrease, when compared to October 2013. Other areas saw declines that ranged from 4% to 8%. Median sale prices throughout the region increased in all areas at a 2.25% average. Alexandria topped all at 8.55%.

Inventory increased throughout the entire region when compared to the same month last year. Alexandria City saw a 16%, and Arlington County increased 40%. In Fairfax County inventory rose by

45%, while it rose by 49% in Prince William County and 55% in Loudoun County.

Year to date there have been 22 homes sold and settled in Barcroft with an average DOM of 35 days, an average list price of \$651,813 and an average sales price of \$649,258. There are currently 2 homes under contract - average DOM of 17 days, and 3 active listings – average DOM of 49 days.

*Looking for to get the best results when buying or selling?* Put my 30 years of local market experience and knowledge to work! Contact me for advice and ask for my FREE report “The 10 Dumbest Mistakes Smart People Make when Buying or Selling a Home...and How to Avoid Them.”

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