



Memories for



The Village View

By David A. Backus, a resident



The Village View



Introduction

I guess you could say that Larry Gordon started all this. The Village View had asked for some input about the community and Larry, an old resident from the 50's, who moved away, sent in an article about his memories concerning Glencarlyn to the Village View in 2008. He had some very precise people and places that he could bring to mind and it was interesting.

Why not?! It's fun to relive those times. The

bad parts seem not so bad, the good parts get better. I'm sure Mark Twain said of his works, they're mostly true.

When we were in high school we had a history teacher, Mrs. Keck. She announced at the start of the year that the school administration felt that sarcasm had no place in a classroom. Then she got this little twinkle in her eye and proceeded to introduce us to the history of the world in a sophisticated sarcastic manner that endeared her to the class as no other teacher that I remember – Unless it was Mr. Diffenbaugh (another great!).

Well, one day, to make a point, Mrs. Keck talked to a couple of our more disruptive classmates – they were rowdy and seldom added much to the class aside from confusion. She asked them if they would mind helping her make a point about history. They were flattered, as much as they could be, and said they would help. She promised them a hall pass for their help.

The plan was to have them (three of them) come into the classroom and start a “fight” just before the class began. This was not to be a “throw a punch” fight but a verbal altercation. It was to be heated and very realistic. The fellows took it seriously and put their hearts into the scene. Mrs. Keck, after a short period to allow the interaction to get to a certain level, interceded and had the miscreants ousted, ostensibly to go to the Principal's office. She then paused and asked us to take a few minutes and write down a “blow by blow” of what had happened. Simple!

We spent the rest of the class going over these recollections and comparing notes. The point she was making became very clear. No two descriptions completely matched. Each of us had seen the exact same actions take place yet there were twenty eight different recitations of the same event. Her last point; remember, historians are trying to recreate something that many of them DID-N'T see years after the fact. It certainly put history in another perspective.

My memories are mine. These are what I saw and what I remember. The “whiffle paddle” in Mr.

Johnson's office (he was the vice principal at Wakefield, and he used that paddle!), the train coming at me at breakneck speed, the smell of ground coffee at the A&P store, the feel of mechanical wizardry at Alward's Garage, the hair singeing heat of the Twelfth Night Christmas tree burning, the stealth of delivering "greens" at Christmas, and the cool water of the Long Branch Creek on a hot summer day are my memories which I love sharing with you. I hope you enjoy reading them .

The Village View has been very kind and lenient with my writing style and stories. The stories have a point—to inform folks about other times in our village and how it was growing up here.

AND a forward? This is dedicated to my daughter, Adriana. This is who I was ... and am.

David Backus was born right after World War II in Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, DC. He was part of the baby boom World War Two, "Hi, honey, I'm home!" wave that revitalized our country.

Billy was the oldest son, David turned out to be the middle son since Alan soon followed (close to "Irish twins"). We were all loved and raised in the best family in the world.

These 'stories' have been put together over many years. They are memories of many good times. I've learned from all of them (well, most of them. Some I just laughed at and kept moving). There's an old saying, "if you live and don't learn from what happens, it's a waste! If you learned something, then whatever you spent on it is called 'tuition.'".

Will Rogers put this thought into another, more pithy statement. "There are some folks that learn by observation; some by reading and some just have to piss on the electric fence!"

Life is interesting. I've lost jobs that I was sorry to lose to later learn, it was better for me, even if I didn't like it at the time. I've made stupid decisions, gone the wrong way sometimes and ... It's all part of life. You never know for sure, but, when in doubt, give it some time and then look back. Funny how life looks with the perspective of time.

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the sky. The haze lay oppressively over everything – and we had known this was going to be a real gully washer. The lightening flashed in the deep purple clouds but so far we had heard no thunder.

The hazy sun was blotted out like someone throwing a light switch. Then a quick gush of wind with the scent of dust and rain intermixed and we were in the midst of the storm.

The huge old elm in back yard had danced in

Last lightening rods on Aunties house @2012



JULY, 1955

It started as a nice cool day then turned into a hot sultry Saturday. The weatherman had predicted a high in the 90's to 100 degrees. As the day progressed, the humidity and heat made you feel like doing nothing – and doing THAT very slowly.

Even the cool breeze that usually came out of the ravine from the woods was still. We had all the windows open to capture any movement of air and the fan was going in the dinning room.

We had tried to play some tennis on the dirt court earlier in the day but the early coolness soon burned off and the haze and humidity had made the game more work than fun and we quit.

Around two o'clock the western horizon looked like a low range of mountains – a purple black ridge that slowly crept up into

the wind as did the oaks in back of the Aunties' house. Lightening had flashed and the roar of the rain on our tin roof and the sudden crack of the thunder overtook everything. We ran around the house closing the windows and doors just in time and watched as the windows closed on the Aunties' house. We knew their front door and windows on the front porch would be open (they didn't believe lightening would run through the house). Their's was the only house in the neighborhood with lightening rods on the roof.

The storm roared and our house shook and groaned in the mighty gusts; it had withstood such onslaughts before. Smaller limbs which had been ripped loose, flew free in the wind with the rain coming down in slanting sheets.

The storm raged for a half hour- hurling torrents of rain and even a quick spray of hailstones that rattled on the tin roof amid the overall roar of the storm.

Mother sent Alan and me to the cellar to see if the sump pump was functioning right.

The north wall (rubble) would leak in such situations, not to mention the entryway from outside.

Alan and I opened the flimsy outside door of the cellar and looked out as the storm blew its fury against the elm tree and the hickories beyond. It seemed incredible that those huge trees could be bent that much and not break. Knowing how tough those trees were, it was a true testament to the fury of the storm that the trees COULD be bent and twisted in such a fashion.

Slowly the storm seemed to abate. Alan and I peered out through the door into the still gray pummeling mist which became day bright for an instant then we were hard slammed by the blast of the succeeding explosion of thunder. We both jumped back into the cellar.

Then mother called down for an update on the sump pump. We yelled up over the storm's noise "It's ok." Then we laughed. Somewhat nervously.

The storm rumbled and growled and drew its retinue behind as it roared on to the next innocents in its path.

We finally went upstairs and asked mother for something to eat. She gave us some bread spread with margarine (she believed it was better for us than butter) and crystallized honey (greatest stuff in the world).

Finally the tempest became a slow drizzle, then a mist.

Our family went out on the screened in back porch with the wet linoleum floor and drew the bamboo curtains up. We looked out on a world of loitering mist with the noise of the dripping trees and the roar of the flooding Long Branch creek in the background and watched the black clouds flicker

and rumble as they headed east.

Finally, with the last mist falling, the sun flickered and then came out in full force and a rainbow appeared in the east, at first just a misty apparition, then magnificently bright – more brilliant because of the back-drop of the angry purple clouds.

We rode our bikes around the neighborhood to see the damage. A few limbs were down and there were leaves and small branches everywhere. Everyone was happy the storm had gone and taken the heat with it.

We had dinner on the back porch that evening. In the quiet time between the day and the evening a wood thrush trilled its wonderful song.

The sun went down and a slow twilight with a few stars followed. The wood thrush' song abated and the frogs in the ravine started in full throat, fighting for air time with the millions of crickets and other bugs' voices that swelled in the night. As we finished dinner, the lightening bugs began their magic sparkling ascent from the wet grass, flying upwards toward the tops of the trees and the sliver of moon beyond.

Then a new sound over the hum of the crickets and frogs began. We could hear the piano being played by Mr. Adler. He had walked down from his home on Illinois and Third Street to the Aunties to play his favorite classics on their grand piano. That evening he began with Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" on a now cool clear evening in Glencarlyn.



side of the rail line there was a pavilion in the woods that held dances on the weekends for the folks that came out from the heat of DC for an evening in the cool woods by the stream. In the 20's and 30's, people would come out to Glencarlyn to stay in summer cabins (of which our house is partially from) and relax for their vacation far away from the big city of DC.

This was how we started, in part. We were one of the first planned communities (lots were designed with 6,000 sq. ft. building sites). Some early homes had larger lots and some of the old houses still stand in testament to our roots.

The earliest tradition that made a real impression on a young child was

It was SPECTACULAR! Twelfth Night tree burn.



TRADITIONS

I grew up in a small village far from Washington DC called Glencarlyn. It was a rural village that had been used as a re-

treat from the heat and congestion of Washington DC in the early 1900's. At the

the Twelfth Night Yule burning. This was a short lived but very memorable tradition (not more than five years of fun. After Christmas, the tinder dry Christmas trees would be dropped off in the vacant area where Kenmore Intermediate School now exist.

This vast undeveloped field was used as a play area, with no delineated baseball fields, no idea about soccer fields, and we

didn't have football fields or tennis courts then either. It had been a dairy farm and was still open land.

This field extended from South Carlin Springs Road on the east to the western Glencarlyn development street on the other side. Just one huge vacant area used by Glencarlyn Elementary School to let the kids enjoy themselves at recess or after school.

The Christmas trees would begin to arrive a few days after Christmas and the pile would grow every day for the almost two weeks before the Yule burn.

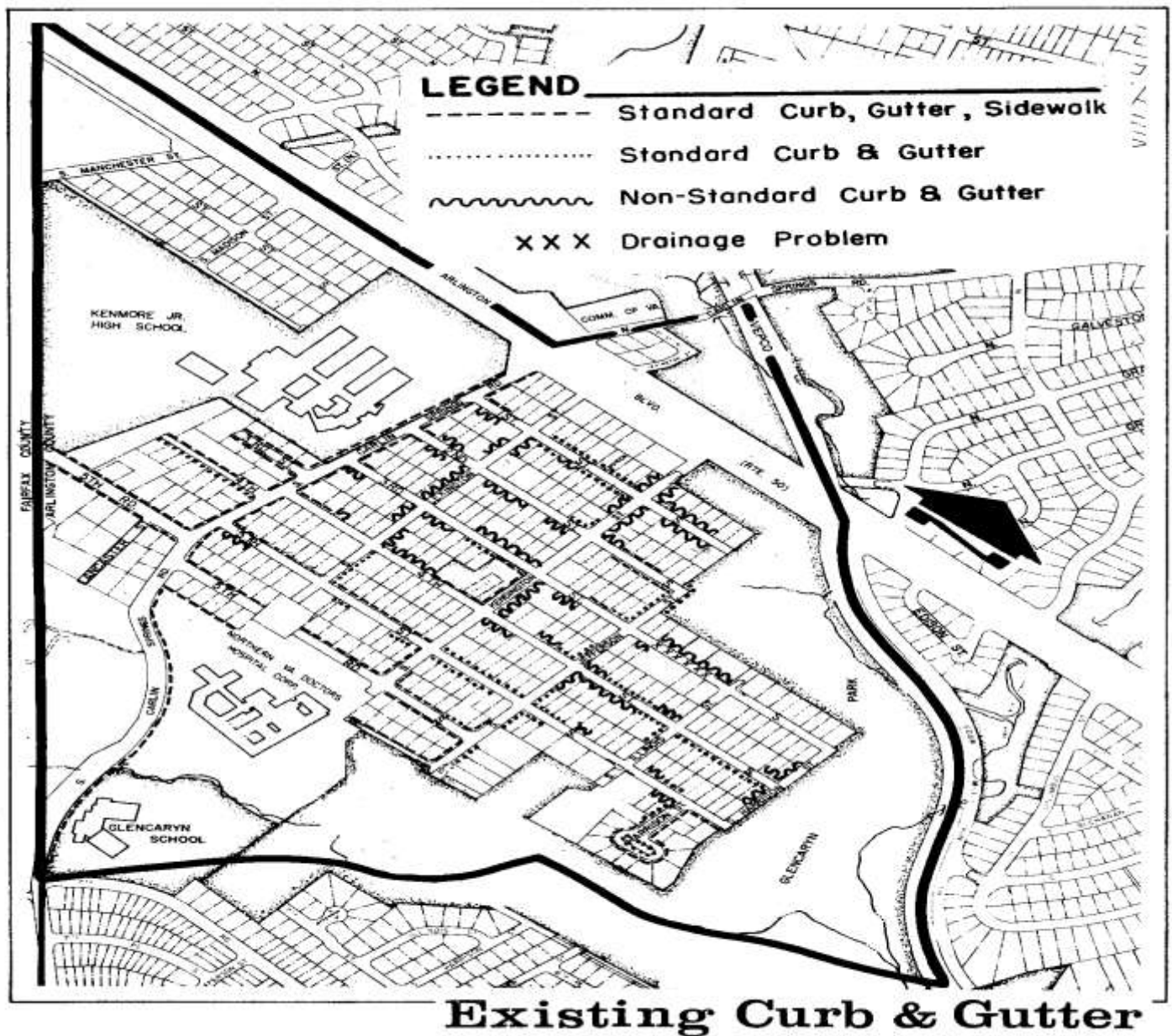
And a pile it was! Usually it was fifteen to twenty feet high of very dry, very flammable trees. It had a base of at least sixty feet.

On the designated night the President of the Glencarlyn Citizen's Association would make a few remarks to the assembled crowd. Most of the neighborhood turned out for the burning. The torch was thrown into the pile and the fire would leap into the sky.

The tinder dry trees would go 'whoosh!' The heat was fierce! We would back up to Carlin Springs Road, and sometimes even have to cross over to Hamilton's little store (the present location of 7-11) to watch the fire. The cars on Route 50 would slow down and then turn off into Glencarlyn (on Lexington St.) to see what was going on. This annual conflagration would go on for a half hour before slowly abating for lack of fuel. The fire trucks were there (just in case) but were never needed.

The next week the kids would NOT play

in that area because of the remaining blackened ground. What a spectacular way to end the Christmas season!



Taken from 1978 Conservation update for Glencarlyn.

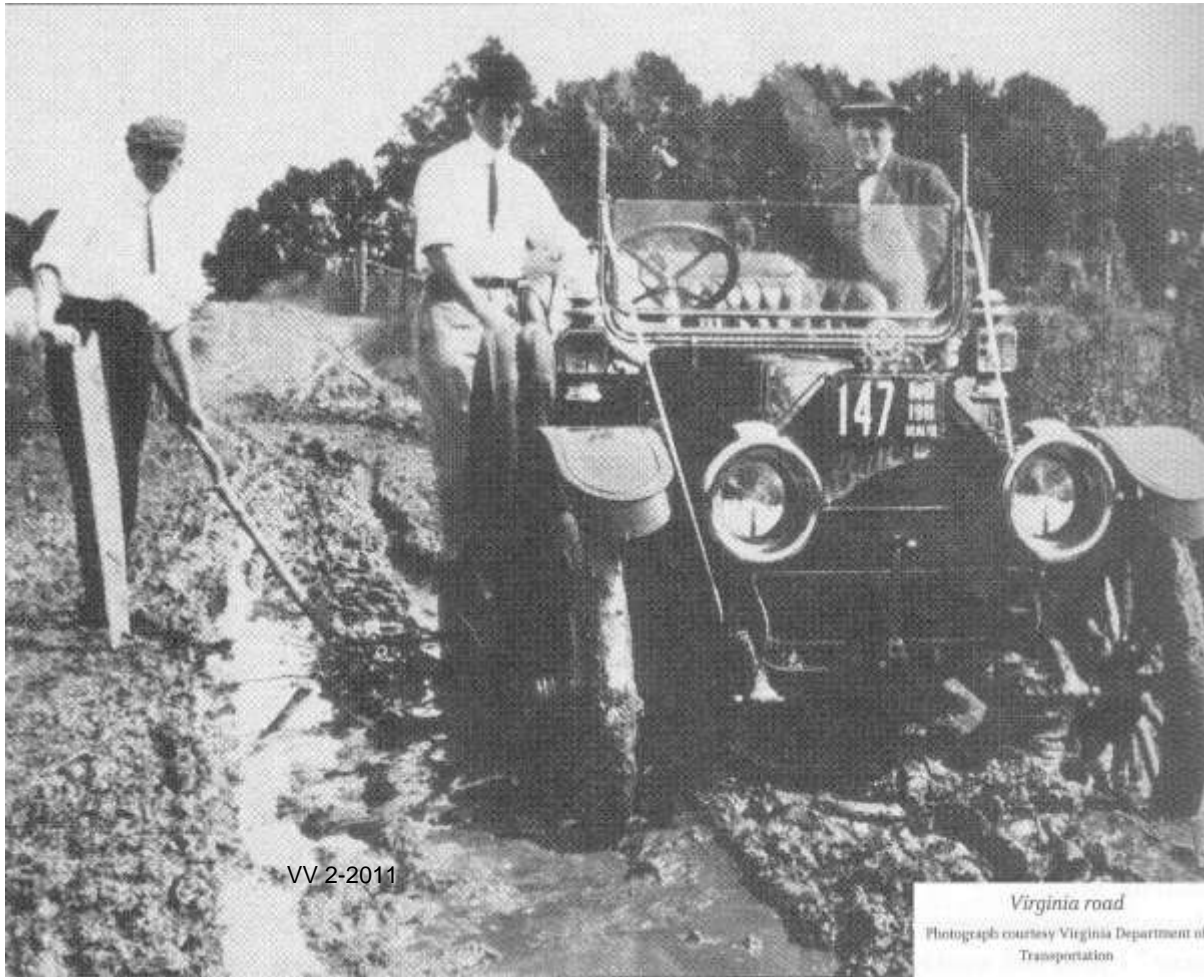
THE LAST DIRT ROAD IN GLENCARLYN

“Early recollections (of the roads) include memories of a fight to get the county to give more attention to our roads. When the frost went out of the ground in the spring, many of them were impassable. Pictures of Carlin Springs Road might well have been taken in a ploughed field.

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When automobiles first came into use, Model T Fords mostly out here, the driver picked the most likely-looking rut and hoped for the best. Passengers usually got out and helped to push a car when it was stuck.

“When my brother moved here in the spring of 1921 his wife would drive while he and I pushed, sometimes as far as from Illinois to Kensington Street. On Sundays and holidays we would go out with hoes and shovels to work on the worst spots. One year my sister and I paid to have gravel dumped to fill a hole at Fifth and Lexington Streets. We also dumped our coal ashes in the road to fill up holes.



the old tree for the road. For many years thereafter, when you came down Fifth Street just 50 feet short of Illinois St., the road jinked three feet to avoid hitting the wonderful old oak tree. When a new neighbor complained about the tree, Aunt Hadassah said, "It's never hit anyone except in

"The roads in the village were formally turned over to the country in 1936. Old residents were truly thankful when material to give a bottom to the mud was finally put in. New neighbors thought us old 'moss backs' to be satisfied with the awful roads they found! Were we? I never saw any of them pushing their cars up the road." (page 23-24 Glencarlyn Remembered, The First 100 Years, Hadassah Backus).



We finally got the county to "pave" our bucolic roads with the "pie crust" materials in the 40's and '50's after many years of having to put up with the dirt roads even with a "new bottom."

When they did put in these "new roads", my Aunt Hadassah stood her ground in front of the old oak tree on 5th street just west of the Illinois cross street and wouldn't let the county folks take down

self defense." In the twenty years it was around, only one minor accident happened and that turned out to be an inebriated neighbor who couldn't negotiate the variation in the road. We all felt bad for the tree.

By the '50's we were losing our main public transportation on the rails from the W&OD line (the "Virginia Creeper" please see Trains P. 98) and moving to cars and buses. Dad could now walk up to the bus stop at St. John's Church. The bus would come in on 5th St. and go up Lexington St. to the entrance to Route 50 (it was the only way from Glencarlyn to go east on Rt. 50). On the way back the bus would come around the "clover leaf" off Rt. 50, up Carlyn Springs under the bridge and make the first left on the road that is now the entrance to Rt. 50 but at that time connected with Lexington St. That old underpass under route 50 was well known. One moving van company even posted a sign for all drivers. "If you get stuck under the Route 50 Bridge on Carlin Springs Road, you're

fired!" This was due to the deceptive opening. On one side (the north side) it looked tall enough to accommodate the truck. The overpass got lower as you went through. Many a truck driver learned the lesson the hard way!

All the roads were paved, to one degree or another except for one. We would be able to peddle (or, for our parents) drive anywhere in the neighborhood with little or no trouble. We even had snow clearing – after awhile. We got hit with a few good wallops of snow In the '50's that pretty much closed us down for a few days (that was the time when my folks strapped the old wooden ski's on me and sent me to Hamilton's store for milk and eggs p.101). Even the old reliable Sealtest milk truck couldn't get in through our snow covered streets.

Were there potholes? Sure. The streets were rough since we didn't get the paving on a timely basis. Peddling the bike (and later, riding the motor-bikes) was a twofold adventure. One had to do with the perils of traffic, the other with the imperfections of the roads. On the motorbikes we also had

to watch for the gendarmes.

So where was the last dirt road in Glencarlyn? It was Illinois St. between 4th and 5th Streets , right in front of our house. 5th St. was only a half block longer past Illinois St. The aunties owned two lots (where the tennis court was) and the other two lots on the other side of Illinois St. The first two lots at 5th and Illinois were covered with woods and the two lots on the other side of the Illinois' dirt road was Glencarlyn's only private (for the community) dirt tennis court (owned by my aunts).

The tennis court had been in use by the neighborhood since the early 1900's. It was the brain storm of someone living with my aunts back in the early 1900's and used as a meeting place ever since.

It was work to roll the court in the spring (my aunts had a large, heavy roller which we would take over each spring and roll out the ruts and small mole hills). There were high wire fences at each end but the sides were left open. If you hit the ball wrong, it was your job to go into the dirt road (which would-



Glencarlyn tennis court on the northwest corner of Illinois and Fifth Street South. Seated left to right: Hadassah Backus, Florence Backus-Doe, and perhaps Peggy Backus. Circa 1950



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Tree work being done on (still existing today, 2014) old oak trees between the last dirt road (newly paved in this picture) and the dirt tennis court with the large field on the far side.

field on the other side.

Since there were no houses that faced onto Illinois St., the county didn't feel it was necessary to pave the street. If you wanted to go over to 4th St., you usually went up to Jefferson and over, unless it had been dry for awhile.

Finally, in 1957 my aunts decided they wanted to build a new house on the western part of their land next to their old house. The stairs and the only bathroom being on the second floor with the bedrooms were the deciding factors.

In order to do this, they sold the lots (all four of them) on 5th Street. The tennis court and field became two new brick houses and the woods on the other side became another two brick houses. The

houses closest to Illinois Street faced that street and the contractor or county had to pave it.

When the county commenced to do the paving, my mother, in the spirit of Aunt Hadassah's earlier gesture of saving the wonderful old oak tree, stood her ground in front of the trees. These old oaks (HAVE to be over 150 years old now) that jut out into the street have never been hit, and if they ever are hit – they will only do it in "self defense."



between to become the fifty foot fiery shades heralding the change of season. The milkweed sends out its fairy dancers to deliver next years seeds and the acorns and walnuts thump on house roofs or twang on the top of the cars.

This year (2008) fall came with the drowsy sun blessed slowness allowing us to savor the unfolding beauty of the season. The leaves barely left the trees by the beginning of November whereas in past years we have used the leaves of fall to stuff figures for the

Halloween festivities.

FALL IN GLENCARLYN

VV 2/2008



Some years fall comes in a rush. Sulen days of rain and cold followed by a quick frost and we're suddenly in the middle of fall.

Some years the trees and bushes slowly turn from the almost uniform shades of green into the myriad reds, oranges, yellows and all hues in

But the leaves do come down from our trees eventually. As the ingeniously carved pumpkins of Halloween slowly cave in succumbing to the ravages of time and the last hearty crickets of summer sing their last songs in the evening, we have always had different ways to deal with the leaves in Glencarlynn.

Until the late 60's or so, we disposed of the ruminants of the season by either composting them or burning them.

My aunts believed in composting. They had three bins for the leaves. These large (29'X20' X 5' high) wired bins, sat side by side at the base of their field (then used for gardening). The bins would take turns getting the leaves collected from the two properties. We would fill one bin with the

fresh leaves. During the rest of the year, egg shells, orange peels and all the general organic refuse would go into this bin (buried with a little lime put on to help the decomposition of the leaves and keep down lingering odors and stop the varmints from digging them up and spreading them around).

The second bin would be the “holding bin” – we would let this slowly decay and age over the following year.

The third bin was for the compost to be used in the gardens that year. My aunts each had a garden. My Aunt Hadassa raised vegetables and my Aunt Constance raised flowers. Each garden was a cornucopia of beauty or nourishment. Every flower you could think of was represented in Aunt Constance’s garden. All manner of nutritious vegetables and berries were raised in Aunt Hadassah’s garden.

With our family, it was “who is going to rake the leaves?” Billy might help (my older brother). Alan (my younger brother) was a very reluctant participant. As the season progressed, the cold and wind would move in and the task of raking the leaves would get more onerous. The idea was to rake the leaves into piles, put the piles on a burlap blanket (made of old burlap sacks used for the garden) and carry the 75 to 100 pound sack over your shoulder to the compost pile. Leaves aren’t light and you NEVER wanted to try to rake them when they were wet. This was hard, dirty work.

My mother would threaten to withhold Thanksgiving dinner until the leaves were raked. This didn’t work too often. We never missed the dinner, but that didn’t mean we had raked the leaves. My mother was a soft touch.

But what of the rest of the community? How did we take care of all those leaves (and there are literally bushels and bushels of them).

If you didn’t compost or rake the leaves into the park (if you lived with the back of your house on parkland), you burned the leaves. It was a simple matter to rake the leaves to the curb and, on a

calm Saturday or Sunday, light the leaves on fire, and, with garden hose at the ready, burn the leaves. This was the season’s right of passage. On the weekends, the neighborhood would be blessed with a strong autumn sun streaming in long beams highlighting smoke from the burning leaves. The scent of burning leaves can instantly take me back to this time.

The piles of leaves could get enormous. Sometimes the piles would be three to four feet deep and be a wonderful place to jump into. We would usually make a pile on a lawn and jump into the leaves until they were all crushed down and then rake them to the curb. Not that jumping into the piles of leaves wasn’t dirty, but it sure wasn’t work.

One of the dangers of these curb side piles of leaves had to do with people parking their cars on the leaves. With the older cars, you could smell the cooking leaves under the car as the leaves would get singed by the muffler. After 1974 and the mandatory catalytic converters (which are much hotter), it was rumored a car could catch the leaves on fire and burn up the car. This is still a problem today.

Speaking of spontaneous combustion (sort of), one year I decided to mulch the leaves with a lawn mower before carrying them to the compost pile. I rammed the mower into the middle of a large pile of dry leaves. It ran beautifully for awhile, mulching huge mounds of leaves into a small pile. Then the mower caught on fire. Dad was not amused. Any way you got rid of the leaves, it was a lot of dirty, hard, and by the time we got around to it, cold work, and there are no real short cuts.

Being a mischievous lot, some of us young boys in the neighborhood endeavored to help the process of burning the leaves accumulated at the curbs. It was a simple process. We took spring loaded clothes pins, adjusted these useful items minimally, and, with an old kitchen match loaded into the mechanism, go look for unattended piles of leaves.

Riding by a nice pile of curbside leaves on our motley looking bicycles, we would pull the trigger

on our ingeniously modified “match projectors” and send a lighted kitchen match into the unattended leaves.

If our plans went well, the leaves would be smoldering and burst into flames just after we had turned the corner on the block where we would stop to see what would happen.

Our ingenuity and helpful contribution to the rights of autumn went on without our taking credit for our selfless acts for many years. When we were discovered, the reaction of our neighbors left us in no doubt about how the neighborhood frowned on such individual initiatives.



David doing test drive 2008

VV 2/2009

BIKES



Because the original Glencarlyn had lousy roads, our first bikes tended to be the old American Flyer variety. These wide tired, one speed, tough as nails bikes provided dependable transportation on the roughest of roads with the large tires providing some comfort along with a padded spring loaded, nice wide seat. Pushing the peddles on these dinosaurs could get you in shape in no time. Or kill you.

Then in the late 50's there was the advent of the English racer. This 'inside the hub rear wheel internal three speed wonder with the narrower tires was much easier to peddle and the roads had be-

come less of a pot hole filled menace to these more delicate designs.

Then the true topping to the bicycle was invented. This was an external chain -changing system that has become the ubiquitous gear system on bicycles of today.

These were our forms of transportation as kids. If you wanted to go somewhere, you either walked (it IS a mile to Kenmore from here and uphill both ways!) or you rode a bike. Bikes were better.

I had them all. Even a cross over (the English internal shifter with an external shifter added). That external shifter was removed from my bike while it was parked on our front porch. I talked to the fellow who "borrowed it" and had it returned. It pays to live in a small community where everyone knows about all the other bikes.

Then one summer, one of us decided to do something different. Bikes

are great, but they have always required leg power. The power lawn mower was here by then and with it came the small motors (1 ½ to 3 hp). With a little ingenuity and a bunch of old parts, one of us created a motor-bike! This contraption was held together with eighth inch electrical screws four inches long and nuts mounting a motor on old angle iron pieces using centrifugal clutches, a fan belt, some adapted sprockets and a whole lot of "bailing wire." But it worked!

We had created a machine that could widen our horizons and economically get us around "town." A few pulls on the starter rope and these rickety creations would obtain speeds of up to 35mph. The wind whipping through our un-helmeted hair, the neighbors watching in disapproval and small animals cowering, we had a great time whizzing around on our inventions. Ralph Nader would have REALLY gone crazy if he could have seen these mechanical wonders and all their

safety (????) features. .

Toward the end of our wonderful mechanized prototype inventions, six of us had created over 6 of these marvelous movers. Each one was unique. We had become masters of the Carter carburetor, the reed two cycle carburetor, the modified handle grip accelerator, the enhanced “shaved cylinder head” and modified oiling systems. If we blew a piston rod, no problem. We could rebuild it in an hour. In a half day (usually Saturday) we could develop a dirt bike or a quick but sloppy “speed” bike.

There were all sorts of variations on the motor bike theme. Some of us used two cycle engines (very smoky); most of us used old four cycle lawn mower engines. Some bikes had as few as 1 ½ hp (real doggy performance). Pat (a guy) had a 10 hp. Power Products scooter that was REALLY FAST! The scooter looked like something out of a Shriner’s convention but really flew. He used to race “409’s” (please ask your parents about these 1960’s Muscle Cars) between telephone poles (on the street as markers) and beat them!

Cecil had a wonderfully welded solid and dependable bike (a Clinton motor that just purred). I had a bolted together model with a VERY used US Army discarded Briggs and Stratton but with 2 ½ hp. It would go when I wanted (if I kept the screws tightened) and stop, most of the time, when the brakes were applied. We had fun!

Sure, it all came to an end one Saturday afternoon. We had gotten together in the early spring-time at Kenmore to have a race. Cecil King could lean his 26” bike over until the handle bars would almost touch the pavement as he raced around Kenmore Jr. High School. Eric had a go cart that could REALLY move. Billy Lewis, had a 3 hp modified Tecumseh with a 26” front wheel and a 12” back wheel on a 26” bike frame (weird looking) that covered ground surprisingly well. Alan had a Power Products powered 26” English racer that was fast but smoky (two cycle engine).

We were having a great time racing around the school when Eric Carlson missed a turn on his go cart, hit a bump, flipped and Eric slammed into

a bike rack and ruptured his spleen. We quickly got the go cart out of sight, put a regular bicycle in its place and called the ambulance.

One person on a bicycle stayed behind to explain the situation as a mishap with the bicycle and a little gravel on the sidewalk. The rest of us departed on our various inventions. I was caught leaving the scene at 4th and Lexington Streets. The policeman had no mercy on me. “Riding an unlicensed, unregistered motor vehicle and running a stop sign, with no driver’s license” is the way he wrote the ticket. He wasn’t at all forgiving when I told him the reason I ran the stop sign was the English racer transmission had stripped out first and second gear and if I stopped I couldn’t get it going again. “Tell THAT to the judge!”

My Mom and Dad came with me to court. They told the judge we were leaving town and he was lenient (I’ll have to tell you that story closer to summer). “Don’t come back ‘til the end of summer and no more motorbikes!”

The various vehicles were confiscated from our group and dismantled by chastened parents to never see the light of day again. Eric finally confessed to his mom forty years later about the go cart being the source of the accident, not a bicycle. She didn’t seem surprised.

When I think back about some of these shenanigans we had as kids, as they say, “It’s only by the grace of God that we’re still around. “ But we sure had fun!

The REAL Bike!

It happened in my junior year going to American University. I needed some inexpensive but fun transportation. It became a Glencarlyn project. I'd known Hugh Miller most of my life (my "procurement officer" at Kensington and 5th St.) He was working over at Cycles Inc. across from the Parkington shopping center (now called Balston).

The motorcycle shop was conveniently located just a block from Speedies – the most authentically seasoned Mexican food this side of a Tijuana taco house served in three connected condemned houses with all the ambiance and atmosphere of a Juarez

house of ill repute.

I asked Hugh if he had any wonderful, fast, dependable bikes for under two hundred dollars. He was kind enough to take me over to the "salvage shed" (the last rusting place for machines whose owners pushed their luck too hard) and introduce



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David, ready to go to class at American U.

me to a 1949 five hundred single Matchless motorcycle (without the front end). I fell in love! I would be able to attain this space age miracle of motoring mayhem for only \$150. DONE!

If you ever want to start a long conversation (usually one way), ask someone who ever owned a bike if anything exciting ever happened. Stories will flow until you find a polite way to escape.

After a summer of “I just need this one last part to make it work,” I made it work. Eric Carlson (my local safety inspector who lived on Harrison St.) drove the bike half way around the block and pushed it back. His unbiased safety rating was that it was not only unsafe to drive at ANY speed but he had serious reservations about parking it in the front yard!

When my vintage machinery was manufactured, you had to have some heft and ability to get the bike started. A kick starter was standard equipment. Because of the unique design of the bike and the weird location of the AMAL carburetor, I would tell people it took a little extra to start the bike. With a straight face I would say it took a teaspoon of black powder.

If they went for that, I would, still knowledgably serious, let them know it ran on white lightening.

Living in our wonderful village allowed me relatively quick access to American University. The bike was fun and easy to park. As one friend said of my bike, “I knew you were on campus from the sound. It was you or a cement truck.” Some folks can some-

times, unintentionally, hurt your feelings.

Since you haven’t figured a polite way to escape (yet), let me tell you just a couple of stories about this wheeled gleaming status symbol. First, I will admit it looked sort of sorry at the outset. Like great artist everywhere, I was able to see the beauty beneath. After getting it on the road (not everyone was happy when THAT happened), I decided it needed a little beauty makeover. After sanding the rust off the major components, I painted it with a wonderful army surplus all purpose rubberized dark blue paint (provided by Mr. Deservio who lived across the street).

Then a neighbor’s daughter, Dorothy McGuire, my artistic adviser (who lived on 5th St.) painted a marvelous dragon on the gas tank over a silver background (metal roof sealer)! You can see it partially in the above splendid picture.

SPIFFY is the only word to describe my wheels! There are probably others YOU can think of, but that’s what comes to my mind.

There was the time I was going through the “K street tunnel” (which runs under Washington Circle in DC) being followed closely by a fully loaded sixteen wheel dump truck. I felt he was too close so I retarded the spark (no wussy automatic ignition timing in 1949) and the bike belched out a five foot blast of fire and smoke – and the muffler blew off as well.

The truck ran over the muffler! No problem. I parked the bike at the far end on the service road and dodged traffic to re-

trieve the muffler. It was a little scratched but still serviceable (although it never looked quite the same).

Another time, as I cruised my way down Military road I came over the hill to find a school bus which had just opened her doors - the red lights flashing. Being a law abiding citizen, I slammed on the brakes - and the front tire rotated on the rim and ripped the valve stem out of the front inner tube. You wouldn't believe how much exercise and fun you can have pushing a bike back from Military road - with a flat tire.

Yes, it was a road bike! All you had to do was keep adding oil (what it didn't burn, it leaked). My first venture on the gleaming gem took me to the exotic destination of Richmond, VA. to visit my college roommate. The bike ran fine but did drop the all important Wentworth tool kit somewhere around Elmira.

If you ever drop ANYTHING off a bike (maybe with the exception of a passenger), the likelihood of your finding that object can be determined on a good computer with the ability to calculate seven digits to the right of the decimal point.

These tools were the lifeblood of tightening the nuts and bolts on this bike. They were specially colored (rust) and were never seen again by me. Wentworth tools are so named because they were formulated by a group of demented English trolls who based their intellectual property claims on a system founded on small fractions of a hector. For instance a 15/35th sized wrench. Metric or SAE have no equivalence. Forever after I was relegated to the use of the

universal socket set (Visegrips).

After my first sorta successful road trip, I drove it to New York! Well, I started in that direction with that as my goal. It sucked the piston along the New Jersey Turnpike. A trooper stopped and asked if I needed help. I asked if he could stop back in an hour or so in order for me to trouble shoot the problem.

Six hours later, night came (the trooper didn't) so I finally crawled up the road bank and found someone with a phone and called Alan (my brother). He drove the Microbus up to fetch me. As we loaded the bike into the bus, the trooper stopped by to let us know NOT to forget to pay the toll for the bike!

I replaced the piston with a Jaguar piston (bet you didn't know the Jaguar and Matchless piston were interchangeable – now you can REALLY impress your friends with useless trivia!) and continued to drive the bike.

Slowly over the course of a year and a half, the bike seemed to age. Finding parts (that fell off) were harder and harder to find. The constant vibration shook everything loose eventually and Visegrips can't get to all the nuts and bolts. Starting it was never real easy but was getting more difficult. When all else failed and class time was close, I would try to jump start it by rolling down the back hill. Dad never seemed fond of the divots the rear tire ripped out of the back terraces. And when it didn't start, the push back up the hill became harder.

Finally the time came. I put an ad in the Post and the same night I was to show the bike, had a big party. When the fellow came to see the bike, I climbed aboard, rolled down the front lawn for the last time, and the motor fired up in all its glory. The headlight cut the warm evening haze as my party guests came out front to witness the fond farewells as the motor roared its throaty voice in the spring evening. I told the fellow I hated to part with such a classic masterpiece but I needed the money for school. I sold the marvelous beast for \$175. As the fellow made the turn onto 5th street with the bike loaded in the back of his trailer, Eric about bust a gut laughing.



Alan and David (with Mom behind us).

THE SCOUTS

There are a group of folks in this world that give selflessly for the good of our children with no special reward except for a feeling of helping. These folks are involved with the Scouting organization. They give their time and talents to help our boys and girls learn to work as a team. The Scout-

ing organization allows a group to accomplish both individual and group goals for the betterment of the person and the community.

My Dad, an Eagle Scout, let it be known that we WOULD all join the scouts and enthusiastically participate in their activities. This was a given.

We had Nellie Doe on 2nd St. as our first Den Mother for the Cub Scouts. I guess we did some hiking and would have meetings at her house at least once a month. We worked on some merit badges but it was really to prepare us for the Boy Scout troupe (644) that all this was done.

Meanwhile, our family would load up the old station wagon during the spring, summer and fall, at least once a month, and go camping in the Blue Ridge Mountains. I have pictures of us going up a mountain trail when we were four to six years old. Mom and Dad liked the great outdoors and it gave us a time to go tromping through the woods, learn to cook and take care of tents and sleeping bags and get along in the "wilds" of the National and State parks.

When it came time to be Boy Scouts, most of the boys in the neighborhood joined the troupe. We met at the then new St. John's church, in the basement for regular meetings. All of the members of the troupe were expected to wear our uniforms to school, on the day of the meetings, even though the meetings were in the evening after 7pm. This was an early way to advertise we had a troupe and get new members. There's nothing like a good looking uniform!

Our trips were organized by Mr. Hedrick (our assistant Scout Master) and Mr. Deacon (our Scout Master). We had a large trailer for carrying back packs and other necessary equipment. There were many volunteer dads and moms who drove

cars to help get us where ever we needed to go and help with the program.

I'm sure we did the museums and other worthwhile activities but the most memorable times were walking along the Potomac from the airport to Mt. Vernon (before there was a good trail). We camped in the Blue Ridge, at special areas set aside for scouts as well as Mr. Hedrick's wonderful farm beyond Winchester. We also tried spelunking (going down into caves) once.

The first time I rode a horse was on Mr. Hedrick's property. It was a huge old farm horse that could put up with someone getting up on him. It was a tough climb, considering there was no saddle. The horse just stood there while I climbed aboard as if this was totally natural.

The first time I fell off a horse was the same day. The horse started to walk forward and went under a dead limb; I didn't want to duck (whoever saw the Lone Ranger duck under a limb?), so I broke the limb. The horse must have thought it was a whip or some other indication for it to leap forward – and it did – and I didn't and was left holding onto a broken limb for support. It was totally broken and I ended up falling ten feet onto the forest floor. I was cross eyed for an hour and Ken Fadely, Frank Walsh, and Charlie Lane thought it was the funniest thing they ever saw. They had been smart enough to stay off the horse, although I think they encouraged me to get on it. Sometimes you win, sometimes you learn.

The best fish I ever ate was from Mr. Hedrick's pond. It was a big trout and Ken, Charlie and I cleaned and ate it within minutes of Ken catching it, frying it quickly in hot butter over a hastily made wood fire.

We had pistol and rifle training, learned how to tie knots, put up tents, cook on fires, boat safety, hiking, canoeing, rowing, swimming and a myriad of other neat stuff. We got merit badges and progressed up the ranks in scouting. One thing that stopped most of us from getting to Eagle Scout was the Morse Code. I could do the other prerequisites, and had a great number of merit badges

– more than enough to move up the ladder, but I could never master THE CODE.

One trip we took to the Blue Ridge mountains was to be a test of our young manhood. Mr. Deacon set up with an experienced Appalachian Trail guide a twenty mile hike in the Blue Ridge. Mr. Deacon and Mr. Hedrick stayed at the staging area to “move the cars to the other end or something”..... I don't really remember their rationale but it made sense at the time.

The guide started at a good pace. We were all young teens and soon tired. He let us rest a bit and then urged us on. All day it was the same. He would wear us down and then let us rest five minutes, then urge us on.

We kept recuperating. He just kept getting worn down. By the end of the day, he lagged behind and we finished the hike before he did. His last words as we took off at a trot was “Just follow the trail. I'll be there shortly.”

Mr. Deacon and Mr. Hedrick were worried when we arrived without our guide. We were a hardy lot of kids used to running and doing something most of the day (this was before too much TV and video games).

The troupe collected newspapers to supplement our budget. We also tried chocolate bars (that didn't work out). We did some civic duty work like cleaning up the stream and some of the paths in the park.

Brad White was in the troupe from 1982 to 1989. From before 1983 to 1985, John Carter was Scout Master, then Ron Boss headed the troupe from '83 to '85. Brad's dad, Phil White was the Scout Master from '87 to the early 90's. Brad said the experiences were much the same as mine – some were great, some mundane. But it helped shape who we are today.

In 1995, for several reasons, Troupe 644 ceased its operations. With its passing, we have lost a great asset to the community and the fathers and sons of the community.



VV4/2010 Bill and Florence with Billy, David and Alan in front of "The Stage."

I REMEMBER THE PUPPET LADY



In our small village we were blessed with a very creative woman with enough chutzpah to put ideas into action and entertain (and make money) using her wits, her charm and her business acumen. Even today, when I hear the Nutcracker Suite, it brings back so many memories. Many of the older residents will remember puppet shows in the park at the Glencarlyn Day festivities.

It started with an idea, probably fostered by the advent of the Muppets, Cucla Fran and Ollie show, Howdy Doody, and the Bill Baird Puppets which all seemed to come on the scene in the 50's.

Puppets were used as light entertainment on television. Saturday morning was a half hour of "Howdy Doody with Uncle Bob"; weeknights it was Cucla Fran and Ollie at 6:30 for five minutes and the Muppets were on specials now and again before they became a mainstay on TV in Sesame Street.

Why not a more personal experience? My mother, an English major graduate of Cornell, decided that it could be done. My father, also a graduate of Cornell, an electrical engineer, was the perfect person to design and build a lightweight stage ("lightweight" being a relative term). The stage was a wooden framed, black cloth hinged affair that could be folded down to a two and a half foot by four foot by eight inch forty pound load carried with a strap over the shoulder. We also tried marionettes but that was TOO much work and string tangles and A lot of headaches.

My older brother, Billy, was good with lighting and sound design. The stories, puppets and varied characters were the product of Mother's imagination and artistic talents based, loosely, on the classics. From Br're Rabbit and the Tar Baby, A Dollar a Minute, Hansel and Gretel, to The Nutcracker Suite (a perennial holiday favorite) to Pinocchio and Punch and Judy, we could do them all.

We had a 1949 Plymouth station wagon (brown) that could hold the stage and the actors in a suit case (up to twenty actors.... hand puppets) and the lights and the music and the everything. This magnificent transportation was later updated to a splendid Halloween orange and black 1958 VW microbus (which was later used for a wanderlust tour of the United States – another story for another time (Please see Stories and Dreams page 76).

She scheduled the shows through "Parties Unlimited" for, primarily, birthday parties but also Bar Mitzvahs, Bat Mitzvahs, or any other party willing to pay. Not being a member of the Actors' Guild, I was paid \$5 a show for my hauling the stage, set up, acting, lighting and music orchestration, etc. I was, however, introduced to the whole

business of the fanciful field of the theater – albeit on a micro scale.

We set up our stage in back yards, embassies, ballrooms, television studios, small rooms in Georgetown and Alexandria, Glencarlyn Park and entertained children of all ages. Since my mother and I (the entire “living” crew) knew where the story was going (and most of the audience did as well), we could structure the show to the audience. The very young children could be brought into the show by asking about the birthday child and with the characters asking for “help” spotting the bad guys or giving the hero advice (everyone loves to give advice, don’t you know, no matter what age).

The older children (boys) enjoyed the Punch and Judy show. Many parents think this famous English show is just a fun romp with some nice old English characters. If you ever get the chance to scan the script of that classic puppet show, you soon realize it’s a dark tale of a very cruel fellow (Punch), his victims and his final decent into hell. The twelve year olds would think the show a little trite before they began to see the gratuitous blood – letting of that amusing psychopath, Punch. A rowdy group at that age could soon be brought to a tamer state and get the moral of the story quickly. After the “play,” it was sometimes hard to transition into singing “Happy Birthday” to the birthday boy or girl after the devil had prodded Punch toward the eternal flames of hell. But we managed!

The best part of the show for me was the “on your feet” repartee of working with my mother with the puppets. We knew the script, but had a lot of fun with the children and would purposefully try to crack up each other with the dialogue and see how the other “character” would handle it. When Jiminy Cricket (the conscience of Pinocchio) would try to talk Pinocchio out of doing something naughty, there were some interesting repartee, which had greater importance than just the story for both of us since I was in my teens and my mother was still my mother.

College came and there were others who helped my mother with the shows. Mike Mullens

and David Malloy were two fellows who helped for awhile after I left.

The last show my mother and I did together was for my daughter’s 4th birthday at the Clarendon Child Care Center. I had forgotten the weight of the stage spot lights and suitcase until the old stage was slung over my shoulder and the tripod spotlights in my right hand and suitcase in my left hand for the one flight walk up to the “theater”. As the children came in for the show with the “OOOOHHHSSSS” and “AAAAAAHHHHHHS” I could feel the old adrenalin kick in. SHOWTIME!

I lit up the stale cigarette for the “whale scene” in Pinocchio. My Methodist Mother always used stale cigarettes for that prop with the thought that after one of those, we would never take up the habit. I began blowing the smoke onto the stage and watched her work her magic with the puppets and the young audience. I could see my daughter laugh and enjoy the show with all the other children. I felt so proud to be able to help bring such happiness to my daughter and her friends. “What a wonderful, miraculous woman my mother is.” I thought.





"And the crowd went wild!" Very happy children at Clarendon Child Care Center watching the last puppet show I ever did with my Mom. After the show the kids get to use hand puppets themselves. Adriana Backus in lower right photo showing her appreciation.





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THAT OLD SOUTHERN TREAT—FOOD!

My brother loves to say that we always knew when dinner was ready - the smoke alarm went off (they weren't invented 'til much later). He says that if there had been "speed dial" on the phone as we grew older, the fire department would have been the number '1' on it. He said the fire department didn't need to ask directions to the house – they knew the way! He also said that we were the only house that ever had the refrigerator catch on fire.

Well, I don't remember all that. Mother got tired from time to time of cooking for three boys and Dad, I'm sure. She DID smoke some cookies and would sometimes get distracted at dinner time

trying to sort us out of one problem or another and would lose track of the dinner.

She was an early adaptor of the need for vegetables in a good diet, the use of margarine instead of butter but, thankfully, she drew the line at desserts. This was her way of trying to make up for the more nutritious meals served before the desserts.

Our electric kitchen stove was adorned with the ever popular "fat container." This universal southern all purpose pan lubricator contained the bacon grease of many moons. When you needed to "grease" the cast iron pan, you just dipped a spoonful of this tasteful all purpose lubricant / flavor

enhancer and added it to the pan before putting the greens or meat or whatever into the heavy skillet.

Our family was involved with hosting visiting representatives from other countries through their embassies. Our close proximity in Glencaryn to Washington DC made us ideal for this. We would have two to several folks come to the house and have dinner. These were eye opening experiences for all involved. We, as a family, would learn about far off countries around the world from people who called them home. They would learn what it was like as a "middle class family" to live in the Washington DC area.

When we had such guests, Mother would cook meals reflecting our guest's differing cuisines. In that way our family was introduced to some very interesting, and sometimes, exotic dishes from around the world. She would mostly be complemented on her abilities (maybe they were just be-

ing polite) but all the meals I remember were very good.

We had an Egyptian couple over a few times and I remember the wife finally wanted to show us how they made a meal. She was on her knees on the hearth in front of the fireplace with a mortar and pestle crushing dry corn for one of the dishes.

One time we had a group from India come to the house. Mother fixed a curry for them which tasted “hot” to us, although the Indians said it was good but NOT very spicy. They were traveling for the next month throughout the US and we invited them to join us when they returned.

There had been plenty of curry left so mother put the left overs in the freezer for “later.” We never got to the leftovers so they were still there when the group got back. Mother heated it up and served it again. This time WE still felt it was “hot” but, surprisingly, so did the returning group. One month of a US diet and their taste buds had been changed!

My Grandmother Backus, one of the early residents in Glencarlyn, felt the same way about good food. Aside from using vegetables from the many gardens in our neighborhood (which made sense because we were originally a farm and agricultural area), she also made yogurt which was not my favorite but Mother and Billy seemed to think was pretty good. No fruit in the bottom of her concoction, just plain yogurt. This was watery skim milk, slightly sour, live – to – a – hundred – years – old in Russia yogurt. I’m sure there is a reason people who love yogurt live to be a hundred years old but it’s certainly NOT looking forward to their next bowl of that yogurt!

We have the family story of Grandmother “B” preparing a Thanksgiving meal at the house but she wasn’t sure the Turkey was ... “right.” After she cooked it, she served a little to the cat. The cat seemed fine and she served it to family and guests with no complaints.

Between dinner and dessert, the cat went out to 5th Street and was hit by probably the only passing car on our street that day and it struggled back

to the porch where it expired. When Grandmother found the poor dead cat on the porch, she assumed the worst and had everyone go to the hospital and get their stomachs pumped. This story trumped anything that was ever alleged about Mother’s cooking.

Aunt Hadassah had the best cornucopia of vegetables this side of a farmer’s market. Anything that could be grown in season, she had. She was kind enough to share with us. At this point in my life I can look back and thank our lucky stars for that wonderful bounty. Back then, well, good nutrition is certainly wasted on the young’s taste buds.

Some fond memories of food are the fresh strawberry short cake with really fresh strawberries, the cream carefully taken off the top of the Sealtest delivered milk bottles, whipped until it was almost butter, served with the hot home - made biscuit short cake. (please see tasty picture).

Another fond memory, the “bug juice” made with tea as a base, then steeped with fresh mint and some sugar and lemon to give it a kick served in large glasses over ice. This was our refreshing drink in the summer when mowing our endless lawn.

There was an old cherry tree in the field next door by the shed (which finally collapsed – both the shed and the tree). Those cherries were REALLY tart. But if you put those same cherries in a pie with a pound of sugar, a touch of lemon and my other Grandmother’s hand -made crust – wow!

Speaking of Grandmother – she loved her soap operas, and tried to get three young boys to watch them with her. NO WAY! But she could make some of the best doughnuts you EVER tasted. When these doughnuts came out of the old hot Crisco filled iron skillet, you just had to have one for taste, one for consumption and a final doughnut for dessert. That and a glass of milk and three boys could run for hours without any further nourishment.

She also had designs on the crab apple tree that grew beside our driveway. Touch your index

finger to the first joint of your thumb – that’s how big they were. Dad was ready to make firewood out of this “nuisance.” The tree would drop crab apples on the driveway. When they dropped and got run over, or not, they attracted wasps and hornets. The crab apples tasted as sour as the cherries but had a special apple flavor.

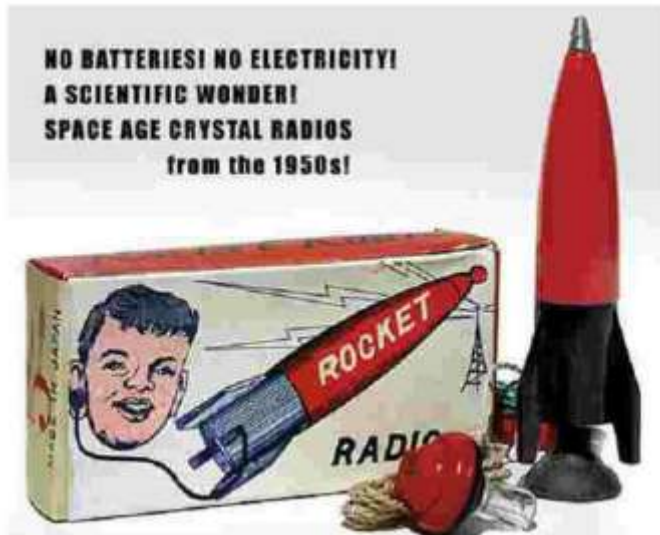
We boys finally found a use for them – sling shot ammo. They were nice, round, aerodynamic and juicy! PERFECT! This “SPECIAL USAGE” did not ingratiate us to the neighborhood but we had fun. Grandmother decided on another more productive use – crab apple jelly. WOW! This became a staple year round and she had us (the boys) collect the crab apples. Collecting crab apples beat watching soap operas.

There was a commercial staple of that era that I miss to this day. This could only be obtained from the A&P food store located in Arlington Forest Shopping Center. The ever popular Spanish Bar Cake was the true culinary delight of desserts. It had a dark cake base infused with raisins and other mysterious exotic ingredients topped with a creamy white frosting.

This magnificent epicurean delight was available at an unbelievably modest price and could satisfy our entire family for dessert, or just me, if given half a chance. I’ve been told by a reliable source that they still produce these tasty morsels but have been unable to locate a vendor.

My brother MAY be right about the combustible nature of my mother’s cooking – I really don’t remember. We never went hungry and although I DO remember mother once telling us charcoal was good for us, for the most part, we had great meals.

Oh, and the refrigerator? Well, it seems, since we loved and had pets, the coils under the refrigerator had become packed with pet hair and the thing over heated and did burn up. That could happen to anyone.



told me it was ok, this once. Then my mom told me she thought Mrs. Jarboe had listened to our conversations for years and turn about was fair. At my age, my only conversations on the phone were with my grandparents and then only after much prompting.

Otherwise technology was all mechanical devices. Our yard was large and the hand - mower was what you used to level the grass. This was a chore for most folks in the neighborhood. For us it was an all day labor of sweat and endurance.



Rocket radio worked well- when attached to back porch copper screen. The lawn mower was GREAT! Sure beat pushing the old one.

Someone came up with the power mower. WOW! This wonder powered a push mower with a ONE AND A HALF HORSE POWER Briggs and Stratton motor. You just engaged the clutch (a fan belt that was tightened with a pulley) and off you went. A miracle!

One morning I was out wrapping the starter rope around the starter piece time and again and pulling hard trying to start the motor when our neighbor (the airline pilot) came over and said "You're plug is wet." He flew when most planes were using piston engines. He then went about his business.

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TECHNOLOGY!

Bicycles and cars were the top of the food chain technologically when we got old enough to start seeing things around us.

The epitome of commercial electrical devices consisted of the refrigerator, the stove, and .. the phone. The village got the phone lines installed in the early 1900's. One of my earliest memories was the ringer on the party line. You had "your ring" which meant the phone would ring in a certain pattern (one short ring, two long, or one long, one short) pause, then repeat. Each of us on the line knew "our ring" and would pick up appropriately. I got mixed up one day and lifted the receiver and got an ear full of what Mrs. Jarboe had to say about the community. My folks



My folks



I wiped off the silver tipped top of the spark plug and pulled the cord two more times and the motor started. Wow! That worked great! I thought I had better check to see if the plug was still wet and reached down and touched the bare top of the spark plug. This was my first experience with small motors and the joys of 30,000 volts of electricity surging through my body put me directly on my

butt. Dealing with small air cooled motors early in my life made me more confident working on VWs later.

Then there was vinyl. Records, that is. We had 78 rpm records which would give us about five minutes of music for a 33 rpm sized record. What is a 33 rpm record? Ahhh. Points of reference. These are (were?) 12" in diameter disc of vinyl which gave an incredible 20 minutes of music. Then you could get a record changer and drop one record (automatically!) on top of the other. When you got two or three piled up on the turntable, they might start to slip which did wonders to the sound fidelity. There is nothing like listening to a romantic Frank Sinatra record, Frank holding a high note and then that note sort of ... wavering as the record slipped. Then we had a demonstration of "stereo fidelity" at a scout meeting. Wow! The only problem was when you got a stereo record and played it on an older (mono) player, it tore the stereo groove out of the record.

Of course there was the advent of TV. My folks tried to ignore this but when our neighbors got a TV and we were spending all our time over there – my folks gave in. We got a black and white with a 15" screen and there were several stations (three) that could be tuned in if you adjusted the rabbit ears properly. To increase your reception (and also let your neighbors know you were affluent and up to date) you mounted an antennae on the roof. Cartoons and Howdy Doody on Saturday mornings and Hopalong Cassidy and Ramir of the Jungle on weekdays made our days more entertaining. How did we live in our village before the advent of these modern accoutrements?

In the late 50's someone came into our math class at Kenmore Jr. High all excited. He had just come back from Hamilton's store (where the 7-11 now exist) and bought an erasable Ball point pen! What will they think of next.

Transistor radios. I felt like the king of the world walking down 5th St. with the 6 TRANSISTOR LAFAYETTE RADIO in my breast pocket playing THE NEW WEAM at full volume (which you

might be able to hear all the way across the street, if I were walking in the middle of the street). This was a marked improvement from my crystal rocket radio that would be clipped onto the back porch copper screen to allow good reception. No walking around with that contrivance.

Bob Chew had one of the first eight track tapes put into his car. You could instantly go from one song to another at a push of a button. When the tracking device got a little worn, you could listen to two songs at the same time! The eight track tape fad didn't last long.

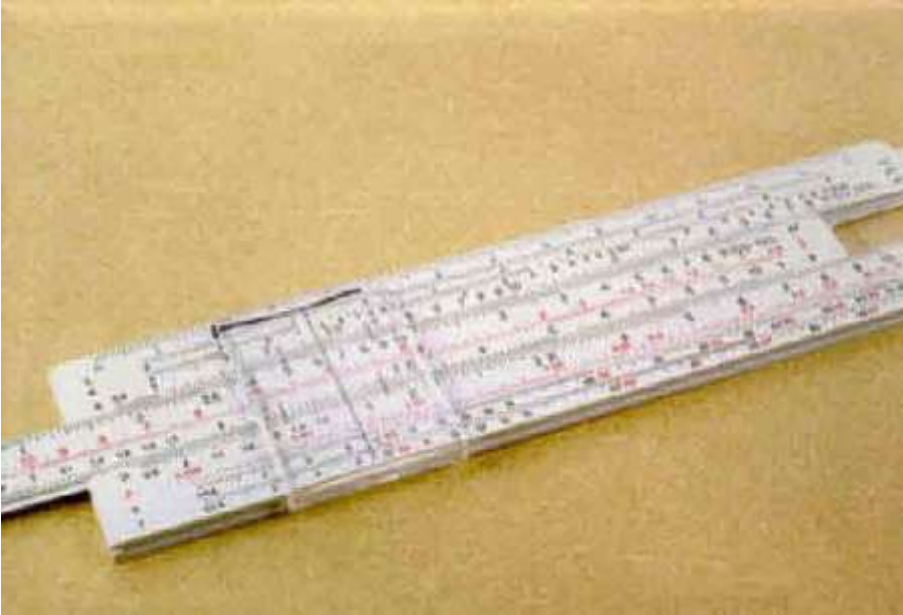
I was in charge of music at senior lunch at Wakefield High School. I would record records from our turn table and songs from the radio onto a reel to reel 8" tape (Walensach). Then play the reel at lunch.

In the late fifties my dad came home from work chuckling to himself. He was an electrical engineer and wasn't allowed to talk about what he worked on. All during dinner he would stop eating and talking with the family and just start laughing. It got very unnerving. Finally we couldn't take it any more and asked him for an explanation. After swearing us to secrecy (three boys in Junior and Senior high school) he related his source of humor.

For the previous month his company had been installing a computer into a special room (very large) with special cooling. The day he came home laughing was the day they ran the initial test. All went well running huge numbers until around four in the afternoon when someone decided to run the square root of nine. As Dad said " It smoked the computer!" The way he said it you could tell the engineers thought it was really funny. I'm sure the company didn't see the humor.

Of COURSE my Dad taught me how to use the slide rule! You could do multiplication, division and, of course, square roots. If you've not used one in awhile (or have never seen one) the slide rule consisted of three pieces. The middle section moved between the two stationary pieces on either side. On the three pieces were printed figures. If you lined up the figures the slide rule would show

you the answer to many complex math problems, including square roots. That's why the engineers laughed when this multi thousand dollar machine "smoked" trying to do the simplest of square roots that any of them could do in their head or on the slide rule in their shirt pockets.



"modern calculator" of the '50's—a slide rule

Some-
time in the middle fifties, with the advent of the A&P food store at Arlington Forest and other stores in the area, we lost our Sealtest delivery truck. They brought fresh milk and eggs to our house and left them in the aluminum clad insulated "cooler" at the front door.

The milk was Pasteurized but not homogenized. What's the difference? One was for health reasons (pasteurized) and the other was for the cream and milk to be combined permanently. The bottles were clear glass and odd shaped with an egg shaped piece of glass on the top of the bottle that allowed the cream to form (and be removed, if you just wanted the cream) or you turned over the bottle, shook it up, and had "regular milk."

The major advances in electronics took place after the Moon Landing in 1969. If you get a chance to see Apollo 13 with Tom Hanks, you can understand how computers were huge (relatively speaking) and used a lot of power. But that started a true revolution in technology for everything in our lives. The electric typewriter was soon taken over

by the first computers and the "word processors." I remember the old "blond Joke" with white out on the computer screens. The technology has progressed so quickly that the point of the joke is missed by anyone younger than twenty five.

It's getting to the point now that the new generation doesn't understand all the fun we used to have with the old mechanical devices that were a true evolutionary step forward for us at the time. The thought of the world without the internet, word processors, cell phones, iPods color TVs and all the rest of what we take so much for granted now, is impossible for kids today to truly understand.

I had a friend who taught high school. They were talking about Custer's last stand. One student asked, "Why didn't he just use his cell phone and call for help?" Ahhhh. Technology.



Moses Hall Spring

VV10/2008



Carlin Springs

THE CARLIN SPRINGS



located at the bottom of the park road (at the north end of South Jefferson Street), across the short bridge crossing the “run off gully,” are two bricked - around springs. These springs are the Carlin Springs. There is a large metal sign on a post signifying the springs’ presence.

In 1872, there were two pavilions located in this area; one on this side of the short bridge for dancing and the other across the bridge by the springs used for eating. This was a spot for Washingtonians, Alexandrians and other folks to come and enjoy the cool evenings in “the country” and have dancing and refreshments before boarding the train to go back home (the train track has now

been converted to the bike path). In 1893 these pavilions were torn down because "...they harbor tramps, are dangerous to unprotected ladies and repulsive to persons of refined taste seeking quiet homes, and because they are in bad condition."

The springs were a constant cool source of refreshment. The children of the neighborhood enjoyed the springs. As Miriam Masi Scull said in the Glencarlyn Remembered: The First 100 years, "We drank water out of those springs all the time. It was just super."

The Carlin Spring (there are two springs side by side in the park) were not the only springs in the Glencarlyn neighborhood. On the south side of the neighborhood there is a spring which originates at the bottom of the hill behind the Backus' house, about 100' from the front of the Long Branch Nature Center. This has been a source of cool water for as long as Carlin Springs have been here. I remember as a child, catching a nice fish in the Potomac and pleading with my parents to bring it home and release it in the spring. The fish lasted several days until a passing raccoon had a hearty meal of it.

Another spring is located at the south end of Kensington street called the Moses Ball Spring and provides a steady stream of water into the Long Branch stream. There is a small bridge you have to cross when you travel in from Carlin Springs Road to the nature center. This is where the water goes under the road.

Springs are not to be dismissed easily. When Henry Jarboe sold his acreage behind his house (what now is the cul de sac at the end of 5th Street South), the property had a spring under it. The developer took fill dirt and filled in the ravine (where the spring seeped out of the hill). This occurred in the 1960's. It took many years, but finally the spring and the fill dirt slowly parted from the rest of the development and caused a foot wide crack to open and sever the water lines to the houses at the base of the cul de sac (this happened in the late 1980's). The situation was solved and there have been no problems since that time.

Some residents have had a "spring" appear in their basement. Again, the gift of Carlin Springs is not always seen as a blessing.

The abundant water supply under our neighborhood has kept the foliage that surrounds our village verdant during the hottest summers and a true source of cooling shade for all of us to enjoy.



dirt when the basement was dug at the 5500 house. This fireplace had a chimney that reached to about ten feet with a large opening on the north side (facing the house) for the fire. It was located at the bottom of the yard between the garden and the house. I never remember using it for an outdoor picnic, but it was used to burn some of the refuse from the garden (that couldn't be composted for whatever reason).

The half of the field that was not used for the gardens was taken care of by a handyman named Dobson – a wonderful man capable of doing anything

needed from putting up a fence, a shed or scything a field with a hand held scythe. He did this for many years until his untimely death as he peddled back to his home in McLean.

Dobson had built a shed which was a two room affair with an "A" framed roof. This building was located at the center of the east line of the field. Beside the shed, about forty feet south of it, Dobson had built three bins about 20 feet by 20 feet each that were used to make compost out of our abundant leaves each year. Each year we would fill one of the bins with leaves, the other one being 'fallow' for a year and the third producing compost for the gardens.

My job, when I got old enough – somewhere around eleven – was to mow the half of the field that was grass after Dobson died. This was about three quarters of an acre of grass. I did have the use of a splendid technological invention, the new rotary power lawnmower. I tried to use the scythe one time and almost took off my foot! The lawn mower was a two and a half horse power, 18" miracle of modern science which kept me busy for hours on a Saturday, mowing in ever diminishing circles of grass. This was great sweat-producing exercise and all for two dollars.

As my Aunts grew older, the gardens fell into decay and my area of responsibility grew greater

VV 9/2012

THE FIELD



The field after being cleared in 2010 by the county. A large stand of bamboo (a very invasive plant) which was a mix of bamboo types was removed at GREAT expenditure of time and sweat by Jim Moser and David Backus. The "walking circle" in the field is maintained by Jim Moser most of the time with David Backus sometimes taking over.

My first memories of the field were when it was half covered with two gardens; one a cornucopia of vegetables and the other a riot of marvelous flowers. That was the area closest to the house on the corner of 5th St. and Illinois St. with the southern half of the field still a large area of open grass. These two gardens were the joy of my Great Aunts, Hadassah and Constance.

My Aunt Hadassah loved vegetables and grew vegetables and berries that kept her larder full for the winter and provided wonderful fresh nourishment for us all during the summer months. My Aunt Constance had the most wonderful fine scented flower garden imaginable. Between the two of them, they introduced us to gardening and the joys of fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers.

The place to look at the garden was on the concrete bench in front of an outdoor fireplace. This fireplace was built with stones taken out of the



Old shed in field circa 1965

as the grass took over the gardens. I finally killed the old lawnmower (through overwork and bad bearings) and my Aunts bought a ride a mower. This two and a half horse power contraption allowed me to sit and ride in ever diminishing circles.



Erin Terry practicing in the field

It was grossly under-powered but it beat the old lawnmower.

The field lay unused except as a "viewscap" for years. My Aunts finally sold the old house (5500

S. 5th St) in order to build a new one - level house west of the old house. The Terry's bought the old house (circa 1882 vintage) but not the field. They asked my aunts if they could use the field for raising two horses. My Aunts were ok with the arrangement and I lost my job mowing the field to the horses who would not only "mow" the grass, but "fertilize" it as well!

The Terry's fenced in the field and bought two horses from somewhere and let their two daughters learn the art of horseback riding in the field and the nearby park trails. Actually, the horses beat the grass into a dusty or muddy field, depending on the season. However, It was a joy to see the Terry's two daughters (Erin and Dee) ride the horses around the field in the afternoons and, at times, take the horses into the park on the park trails.

The Terry's moved to Fairfax with the horses when Arlington banned the use of the park to "hoofed animals" and the new owners, the Koepens, took over the house. The field was still there, owned by my aunts and quickly reverted to a grassy meadow. The ride a mower was brought out of retirement and struggled along for another few years, finding the load more and more difficult to handle. This was partially due to its age, partially due to the grass (which seemed even more vigorous after the horses had added nourishment to the ground) and, I will admit, the weight of the machine operator. I had gone from a svelte boy of twelve (maybe 130 lbs) to a more "filled out" fellow of 175lbs.

When my aunts died in the late 60's the estate was probated and the property was bequeathed to the members of the family. The portion of the family living in Alexandria did not see any need for the property to be kept intact and wanted to sell to the highest bidder.

One of our neighbors, a contractor, put in a bid of \$17,000 (a great deal of money in those days). John Carter, Doris and Arnold Carlson my father and several other members of the Glencarlyn Citizens Association met and decided to come

up with another bid. Arlington County was asked if they wished to purchase this property but declined due to a lack of funds.

The cousins in Alexandria were willing to have the field stay in its pristine state but they did want to get the money out of the property. They gave the GCA group 48 hours to come up with the matching bid and they would defer to the wishes of the community.

John Carter, Doris and Arnold Carlson and Florence and William Backus, among others, did a fund raising drive in two days. This was NOT easy in those times and in this community. As the deadline approached it was nip and tuck whether the money would be fully pledged but, like an old movie, the money was pledged and the field was purchased by the committee. This was to be an interim solution, the field to be held until such time as the county would buy it from the group. This took about two years for Arlington to raise the necessary funds to buy the field from the group.

Meantime other property came on the market in the form of the Hickman property (now the site of the Long Branch Nature Center). This property consisted of ten acres or so of land stretching from the little bridge over the stream from Ball Sell-

ers spring to an area several hundred yards down the stream from the Hickman's house. The county knew they were getting a great deal – The Hickman's were very conscious of what the land was worth both as land and as the pristine setting it was. They made a deal with the county which the county couldn't refuse.

Before the Nature Center was dedicated as a nature center in 1972, there was talk of putting in a ski run down the old access road to the house, which came down from the end of Jefferson St.

This was when it was very cold in the winter (in the 1970's) and we used to go to Washington, Virginia to go skiing. The idea of a ski run was finally nixed and the Nature Center came into being in 1972.

The Nature Center has done a wonderful job of maintaining this open field allowing us to see what the area looked like a hundred years ago. It has been periodically leveled (to remove the ever invasive trees) and re-seeded with the wild plants originally here. There are foxes, deer, rabbits, the usual squirrels, chip monks, birds and who knows what else calling this a place to enjoy, not to mention the folks with dogs and just a love of looking at wild flowers and an open field.



Field in the fall 10-13-11



"Rosie" being fed by Adriana Backus. This was done by Florence Backus with the Ball Sellers' house on the left, old library in the middle and Mrs. Benn's (General Burdett's) house behind Rosie. This is a composite—the old library was gone (as was Rosie) when Adriana was this old.

VV 3/2009



THE HORSES OF GLEN-CARLYN

Yes, this was more than a "one horse" town.

Glencarlyn became a development when horse power was reflected in the number of hooved feet on the ground, not the number of cubic feet in the car. If you wanted to do something, or go somewhere, you used your feet or a horse, or, if you were headed in its direction, the trolley (W&OD rail line)

I wasn't around then, but Glencarlyn and the Lee Mansion were two areas you could go in order to get away from the heat and smell of DC in the summer in the late 1800's.

Horses are glorious animals BUT they do have side issues. Anyone who has cleaned a stable (which I have) know this for a fact. The advent of the motor car, regardless of the consequences of

air pollution, has had a miraculous affect on our society. Removing horses from our everyday lives has also contributed positively to the aroma of DC.

Horses. The first one in many years in our neighborhood lived on the east side of the Burdett house located across from the library. The horse's name was Rosie and she was a pony. Her job had three parts. One, to keep the grass "mowed" on the east side of the house. She worked eight to ten hours a day doing this. Two; keep the same grass properly fertilized (which she did her

best to do at the same time she was "mowing"). Three; to be a source of entertainment and enjoyment to the neighborhood. Rosie was a good natured pony and would come to the fence to be fed by young and old alike. She could nip fingers if the provider of long blades of grass wasn't careful, but it was not intentional. Her other "duties as assigned" did not include any horseback riding or other strenuous chores. Rosie's life was one of leisure, being a part of a bygone year and a source of pride to our neighborhood.

When interviewed by the authors of the "First 100 Years," Mrs. Benn, the proud owner of Rosie, said she did have problems with some of the young rascals of our neighborhood letting Rosie out of the shed and through the gate. This lead directly to many hours of fun leading the neighborhood on a wild chase until Rosie was "captured" again and put back in her yard. (Contrary to some rumors, I was never involved in these shenanigans).

There was also a stable at the Deaver's. This is the house with two storied white pillars that is located on the property behind the Manor Care center on Carlyn Springs Road. They had several horses, but they were not in Arlington, nor a part of Glencarlyn, although they did, at times, ride the horses on the park trails in Glencarlyn park.

But wait! There WERE more horses in Glencarlyn. In the '60's, the Terry's moved into the old house at 5500 S. 5th St. Mr. Terry was a very bright fellow who worked at the State Department. His wife was equally intelligent. They had two wonderful daughters, Eleanor and "Peanut" and a son named Bill. The Terrys talked to my Great Aunt Constance and negotiated a deal. Since the wonderful gardens of my great aunt's had slowly deteriorated over the years, the field behind the house at 5500 had become a large open grassy area that I spent many a summer mowing with an 18" rotary mower (until that mower died of old age and bad bearings).

The Terrys ended up getting two ponies / horses (I really don't know the difference) and put up a small shed / stable to house them behind the 5500 street address. They also fenced in the old garden - field for the horses to use as grazing land (put me out of a mowing job). Eleanor and Peanut would ride around my aunt's field, and then the park adding a wonderful rural feeling (and a few "droppings") on the park trails.

The county seemed to have no problem with this situation as long as we didn't (as a community) have any complaints. No one complained (and we all watched our step on the park trails).

This situation lasted for several years. I even got to take care of the lovely beasts one weekend when the Terrys were out of town. I made sure the horses were fed and watered and, in a show of appreciation, one stepped on my right foot and the other tried to re-arrange my anatomy with the business end of a hoof (he missed). After that, I was reluctant to be the caregiver on weekends. Alan and Billy were of a similar indisposition after I limped home and told them my sad story.

How did it all end? Rosie passed on after many years of happy, sun blessed contentment as one of the main attractions of Glencarlyn.

The Terrys moved to Fairfax to a much larger piece of land with their wonderful four legged friends.

Since that time, the county has passed an ordinance that keeps this a "horse free" zone into the future. It was a wonderful time, though. You could go lean on the fence and feed Rosie, or watch the Terry's horses play tag with each other in the field and just be content with the simple pleasures of life.



Dee Terry rides in the park down by Barcroft apartments and enjoys a horse drawn winter day on 5th St. S.





Picture taken by Carl Schulze in 1950 and rescued by Eric Carlson in the 1980's



Carl Schulze and his wife



Pond located now where Carl Schulze had a road to his house in the woods. This is on the north side of the Nature Center entrance



The Stetson house that DIDN'T make it. It was torn down to make way for the hospital center.



THE HOUSES IN THE WOODS



Picture at left is the two summer cottages that made up the Backus house at 5432 5th St. S. in the late 1800's. The picture on the right is the picture of the "newly renovated (pieced together) cottages in 1926.

There were several houses in the woods, some are still around and some are not. The ones that are still around are "The Gables" at the north end of Kensington St., the Jarboe house at 5426 S. 5th St., the Backus house at 5432 S. 5th St. and the Long Branch Nature Center (originally the Hickman house at 5500 6th St. S). This is now 625 S. Carlyn Springs Rd. and the Stetson house (now across from the Glencarlyn Library which was originally located where the "Urgent Care center" is now located).

The Gables (built in the 1800's) is a wonderful house that got caught between the neighborhood and the "new county road" (Route 50). Before route

50 was put in, the Gables overlooked the stream at the bottom of the hill and the only real noises came from the birds and the occasional trolley / rail use from the W&OD line. It has some wonderful plantings around the house put in by its owners over the years.

Jarboe's house, along with the Backus' house, were at the end of the road of 5th St. S. The original access to Jarboe's house was across the front of the Backus' house, which is why it's so hard to grow grass in that area. These houses were built in



The Gables, 6 South Kensington Street



By Bob Buckette—The Washington Post
Margaret Stetson stands in front of her unoccupied family home, located at 611 S. Carlin Springs Rd.

Mrs. Stetson in front of house before it was moved into the center of Glencarlyn.



Henry Jarboe's house at 5426 5th St. S. (see page 118).

the late 1800's to early 1900's. The reason for not being more specific is the nature of their "additions" that were added over time.

Henry Jarboe had dogs in a kennel down on "the point" which was a high ridge going south - east toward the park. His was the last house on the block on the south side of 5th St. He sold this land off in the late 50's to a developer and the 'point' was bulldozed and houses put into the resulting cul de sac (S. Harrison St. Please see page 118, AND A "Beautiful view of the woods") Again, the Jarboe' and the Backus' house didn't move, the neighborhood just encompassed their existing locations.

The Hickman House, had access to the neighborhood through the south end of Jefferson St. This house was converted by the county into the Long Branch Nature Center on November 11, 1972. The county added an addition on the south side of the house when they converted it to the nature center. The Hickman house (@ 1,300 sq. ft.) and property, which was 10 acres and bought by the county in the 1960's, and the rest of Glencarlyn Park (97+ acres), is currently on the Arlington real estate assessment books as having a value in excess of \$84.8M – now down to \$72M.

The Stetson house (covered in the next article – The Moving House) was in the center of the Dr.'s Hospital site and was moved from that site to a place at the bottom of the hill by the Long Branch

Stream (across from Campbell Elementary School) and from there to its present location across from the library. There was another, larger house in the same area but it was torn down when the hospital came in (see above picture).

There are three houses left on the list. Actually, they, like the other Stetson house, are gone except in memory. Two of these houses were on either side of the road that is now used to enter the Nature Center . One house was located on the south side of Long Branch Creek, tucked away in a little nook on the hill overlooking the stream. This was built on a cement slab by the Myers. It was one story high, with a footprint of around 1,500 sq. ft. To get to the house, you came in from Carlyn Springs Rd. (it was all gravel and dirt as pictured above) and took the fork to the right to cross a short bridge that went over the stream and up the hill to the house. This dirt and gravel road did not go around to the Hickman house until the Park Authority closed the Jefferson St. entrance and opened the paved entrance that exist now.

After several severe storms, the Myer's bridge washed away (three times, as I recollect) and another entrance from the other side of the stream was created (using 7th St. S.) The house finally was sold to the park and only a squared off flat piece of land and a few steel posts remain to outline the area where the Myer's house existed on the hill.

The dirt road forked to the left as well as the right (see photo above). The fork to the left wound around a hill and went up to the house that Carl Schulze was remodeling for his wife and himself to live in. Carl had worked hard all his life. When he retired he loved to make wine and photographs, and above all, he loved his wife. He bought the property and began rebuilding his "getaway" dream house in the woods. Carl Schulze's house (@ 1,800 Sq ft) was not a one story affair but had two stories and a "basement" that, because the house was located on a hill, allowed a person to drive up the winding drive and into the parking area and en-

ter through the basement, or drive further up and enter by the kitchen entrance.

He stopped rebuilding this dream house when his wife died. The partially completed house sat on this wonderful hill overlooking the woods on all sides (it wasn't park land at that time). After his wife's death, he never worked on the house again. The dream house sat, three quarters completed on its glorious hill and slowly deteriorated over the years, looking forlorn and forgotten. When Northern Virginia Doctor's Hospital came in, a deal was struck and the house was eventually torn down. The site of Carl's dream house is still there, covered in a maze of brush and thorns. As one architect said when she saw the site, "What a wonderfully perfect location."

The last house in the woods, a house built in the 50's on a cement slab, was located above what is now the "Frisbee Golf Course" on the northwest corner of Route 50 and Carlyn Springs RD. This house was still in use during the 70's until a fire finished it off. The county bought the land to add to the park. The only remains of this house consist of what looks like a well casing in front of the #3 "hole" on the Frisbee golf course as a reminder of what was a nice location for a house in the woods.



Mrs. Stetson in front of "the moving house"

THE MOVING HOUSE



During the GCA meeting held in March, Michael Leventhal talked about some of the history of Glencarlyn and how it came to be the community of homes that span the earliest days (1742 with the Ball Seller's house) to the latest additions on 3rd and 5th Streets.

We grew slowly. There were 15 houses by 1900 in a community that was designed to hold closer to 400. Why? We were on a rail line. The climate was good (as anywhere else in Arlington) but we didn't thrive as other areas in Arlington did. It wasn't until the mid 40's that the community began to really grow. We went from around 100 homes to over two hundred and fifty homes from 1943 to 1957. That is in part, why we have a community that has

houses that represent the wide variety of architecture over the years.

One of the more remarkable houses in our community is the "Old Stetson house" which is located on the south east corner of Kensington and third streets.

It's original name is really Eastlawn. Although it is one of the oldest houses in the community, it took awhile for it to settle precisely where in the community it was going to be.

The house was built in 1868 and was located where the Urgent Care Center now exist. It was off the road by a hundred fifty feet or so. On snowy days in the '50's young boys would go over to "Stetson's hill" overlooking the Carlyn Springs road and pelt cars with snowballs. By the time an irate driver could get out of his car (very dangerous because of other cars), we could be away over the hill and headed back into the neighborhood by the back trails.

In 1958 the house and property were sold to Northern Virginia Doctor's Hospital. There were two houses there; Spring Hill (a newer and larger house) and Eastlawn. Springhill was "taken down (destroyed) but the smaller Eastlawn was cut in half and moved to the bottom of the hill where the Doctor's Hospital Office building is now located.

Later, in 1975, Northern Virginia Doctor's Hospital bought the property the house had moved onto. This property was under threat of condemnation by the county. The Doctor's Hospital administrators then offered the house to Mrs. Stetson, if she would move it.

Where should it go? Originally the county thought a good place to move the home would be the parking lot at the head of the park at the end of 4th Street. Why did the county have anything to do with the new location of the house? It was probably part of the deal made with the hospital and the Stetson's when there was the threat of condemnation and the forced sale of the property.

The county was ready to allow the move. Mrs. Stetson was going to move the house through the park (what is now a bike trail / road to the nature center then up the park road to the new location in the parking lot (according to Mrs. Carlson).

When the idea was floated to the community, Mr. And Mrs. Carlson, who lived across from the parking lot at the head of the park, retained a lawyer to research the historical records of Glencarlyn and then go to the meeting dealing with the relocation.

One of the early stipulations when the Glencarlyn Community gave the park land to the state of Virginia in 1935 was that the

land would be used as park land, in perpetuity. When Arlington county took control of the land in 1943, it retained the same stipulation.

When the Carlson's lawyer presented his case, the county board decided on the new location across from the library. This was part of the land for the Ball – Seller's House. It was a lovely grassy area to the west of the the old home.

The final moving of the house took many slow hours. The big wheels were large airplane like (wide and able to give) kept the house up and the truck pulled it slowly up Carlyn Springs Road, a right turn through the hospital parking lot then up Kensington Street onto the new basement foundation. Electrical lines had to be taken down, tree limbs cut and the house had to be very carefully (slowly) moved to where it now rests in the center of Glencarlyn as one of the truly lovely houses in our community.



VV 11/2008

FORTS!

Glencarlyn has been the home of forts since the Civil War. Probably the Indians who lived here before that had forts as well. The forts I'm talking about are the forts of a boy's dream – a place of his own, using old wood, a few nails, a few pieces of this and that, imagination and some skill, and you end up with a "club house" of your own.

As the boys of Glencarlyn grew up, there were forts built around the community. Not all the boys were younger than sixteen. Some were parents who liked the idea and "helped" their kids build such places. Some forts were pretty shabby; others were very nice, and some were spectacular!

In the '50's, we had many military families move in (and out) of our community. In those days the goods were shipped in large wooden crates made of rough cut 1X6 by up to 8' long boards. After the crates were unloaded, the crates were put out on the curb for the trash. This natural resource was employed for several "forts" in and around our neighborhood.

On the South side of Glencarlyn, we had a fort located in the then swampy area of the 5700 block of 5th Rd. It was about 10' by 10' with sides, a floor, roof and hinged door. It was a "club house" for an informal group of boys (and it was rumored a girl or two). It wasn't plush, but it gave them some privacy away from the village.

Another place was located across from the Nature Center on the east hill. This was larger, much better fitted together (a small log cabin) put together by the Hickman's for their children. (the Hickmans owned ten acres of the woods on either side of the stream). We didn't go into that building – it was more of a small house than a fort. It was also in view of Mrs. Hickman, who did have a rifle

The 70+' high perch for the "fort" built by Mr. Christiansen for his children. The old wooden steps still there (all the rest is gone). This is (was?) at the south end of Jefferson St. About 80' beyond into the woods.

and was known to take a shot now and then at “trespassers.”

Of course we had a fort as well. Our fort was built on the hill north of the Nature Center. We dug out the hillside (about 8’ down into the ground on one side and 2’ on the downslope), used the old packing crates, some tar paper, an old wood stove, and even ran some power to it from our house using some communications wire from Mr. DeServio’s ample odd job supply. We had lights and a solenoid operated lock on the door for entry. When we wanted to make sure no one could get in, we just unplugged the power to it from the house current. The fort was 10’ by 12’ with a 7’ to 6 ½ ‘ sloping ceiling / roof. We covered this fort with leaves and branches to camouflage it from people who might look for it. We also built a tree fort about 20’ up on a tree at the top of our hill.



Our luxury FORT on the hill BEFORE we covered it.

We had “meetings” and were up to one kind of mischief or another. This was where we originated the bee-bee gun fights that would cover the adjoining field and other times would be a stand off with the tree fort shooting down and we defending the regular fort. We almost stopped that sort of fighting after we hit Charlie Lane in the eyebrow with a bee-bee. But Charlie said it was ok and we continued. The end of the battles came when we chased three of our compadres over the field and onto the next hill into the backyards of the Jefferson St. neighbors.

Ken Fadely had a good shot and just missed Charlie. The bee-bee hit the bricks that Charlie was hiding behind and ricocheted off into the Freeman’s picture window. We all ran back to the fort, but Mr. Freeman knew who we were.

Dad was not amused! We were grounded. We had to pay for the picture window. All armaments were confiscated. I found the barrel of my bee-bee gun in the trash after a month. I pulled it out and asked Dad where the rest of my gun was. He said that was the last piece – the rest had been pieced into the trash over the last month.

What happened to the old fort? It burned down in the winter (with the neighborhood looking on) as the fire trucks arrived to stop the spread of the fire. One of our group had gone into the fort in the morning in February and lit a fire in the wood stove to stay warm. He stayed for two hours and the metal chimney got too hot and caught our camouflage on fire.

We were all members of the Boy Scouts so we were prepared for just such a problem. We had a fire extinguisher on hand. It was a water pump affair. It had been very cold that week. The water had frozen.

There was nothing left of the old fort but a pile of smoking ruins. We had all grown and had moved from boys to young men and had better things to do than rebuild an old fort (dances, track meets, basketball etc. took our time then.)

There were other minor forts in the area, sometimes nothing more than a clearing in the laurel or a few boards over a bare spot. The one fort that still has the remains visible (2012) from that era is down in the woods at the south end of Jefferson St. Mr. Christiansen built this with his two sons (he also had a daughter). When I look at the “rungs” up this mighty tree to the fort (no longer there), it shows how wonderfully crazy we all were about forts. The rungs go up at least 70’. The fort must have had a great view, but just thinking of the climb to that height makes me happy we decided on a fort in the ground.



Fresh, tasty donuts delivered right to your door! Wow! Who could say no to that? Spudnuts, anyone?

EARNING A BUCK

There were ways of making money in Glencarlyn. Doing yard work was one of my early ways of getting money. My Great Aunts would pay me \$2 for two hours of pushing the 18" lawnmower

around their one acre field. If you like to see grass all level and don't mind walking in slowly diminishing circles, this was a good job. I did this until the lawnmower died of old age and bad bearings. You can't believe how long it takes to kill a lawnmower!

My aunts then bought a 2 ½ horsepower Clinton ride a mower. This wonderful device allowed the person in charge to sit and guide the mower around in those grass flattening diminishing circles. When Alan saw the ride a mower he decided this was great, for about half the job. He never did get into yard work. Billy didn't even try. The job was all mine! And I still got the two bucks.

The ride a mower lasted until my Great Aunt Constance allowed the Terrys to raise two horses in the field. The horses did me out of the job by both mowing AND fertilizing the field for several

years.

Other endeavors we tried were selling rich dirt. This consisted of digging rich soil out of the ravine behind the house, (this was the area just below the aunties' compost piles). We would put the rich soil into paper grocery bags, then putting the grocery bags on our little red wagon and going from door to door selling the bags for a quarter a bag. This was not a very successful way of getting money. My Great Aunts were not impressed with this entrepreneurial enterprise since it contributed to erosion in the ravine. This was a short lived, labor intensive and not very lucrative operation.

Lemonade stands were always a bust. We would set up our little card table and picture of lemonade on the corner of Illinois and 5th Street and wait And wait And It is a really poor location for a lemonade stand. At the time there was very little traffic (the road ended with only five houses beyond our corner). Usually there was no business and we ended the day by drinking our inventory.

Delivering newspapers was one endeavor that Ken Fadely did for years. These were the years when kids did the delivering (sometimes parents would have to fill in when their kid was sick). Ken was very diligent keeping up the accounts, delivering the Evening Star news papers every afternoon and going from door to door collecting the monthly amount. He was a good businessman. He took his job very seriously. Over the years he also increased his subscription list.

The Washington Post delivery was harder. This entailed getting up at four or five in the morning and getting the papers delivered on a bicycle in all sorts of lousy weather. There was a lot more turnover for Post deliverers. Ken only had to get up early on Saturday and Sunday. The rest of the week the Star was delivered in the afternoon, just after school. Ken would peddle the neighborhood doing his deliveries when the weather was less trying and the hour was not so abrupt.

We had one industrious fellow who delivered the Post and used the early morning delivery

schedule to supplement his income by pilfering car parts. He didn't last long at either job.

Then there was the year I became the local distributor of "Spudnuts." A great product, these tasty confections (very close to Krispy Kream doughnuts) would be delivered to our house on Wednesday and I would go out and try to sell the doughnuts door to door in the neighborhood.

I could order jelly filled (raspberry) or cream filled, or powdered or the perennial favorite, glazed in half dozen boxes for my clientele. I'd get a few folks who thought this was a great idea for a few weeks and then stop buying. My clientele would check their weight and stop ordering. My profit margin was good, but my clients' scales ended up tipped against my business model.

Since there was a no return policy to the Spudnuts company of unsold product, when I didn't sell the goods, my family bought the remainder (at cost). The whole family gained many pounds during my two month attempt at persuading the families in Glencarlyn that a good diet should include Spudnuts. My folks felt that, although we were gaining from the business, it wasn't economically. I was told to drop my early sales position.

We weren't the only ones trying to get a buck. The Boy Scout Troop, Troop 644 (please see **The Scouts** P. 23), also tried to get money. We couldn't sell cookies (an idea already being done by some other group). We collected newspapers.

On a designated Saturday, we would get out the troop trailer (used to haul back packs etc. for outings) and go around and collect all the newspapers Ken and Billy Lewis and Dave Banya et al had spent the last month delivering. We were quick and young and we didn't ach like Woody Hedrick or Richard Deacon (our assistant and Scout Master) did the next day.

Once the trailer was full, the designated driver (usually Woody) would head to Georgetown and a recycle place there would pay us \$35 for a load. It was hard work, but the money helped the troop cover expenses.

St. John's had bake sales and little carnival like get togethers. They were fun and we even found a way to get even with some bullies who came over from another neighborhood and made life tough for the little kids.

These rascals would have lit cigarettes and walk around and stick the lighted cigarettes into the little kid's balloons. It made the kids cry and the parents could never catch the bullies in the act.

One thing we had done as scouts is go spelunking as a senior scout trip. To go spelunking means you go down into pitch black caves and crawl around with bats and dirt and mud and neat stuff like that. Lots of fun for growing boys. One light source used is a carbide lamp. These lamps would be attached to a helmet. Small rocks of carbide would be put in the bottom of the lamps and water in the top. When the water would drip into the carbide it would create acetylene gas. This gas would be lit and the flame would light the way into the pitch black cave. It worked great until you stopped to look around in the cave and the light on your helmet (the flame) would flambé a bat hanging from the ceiling (which NEVER smells good).

We got tired of these bullies busting balloons at St. John's and worked with a few young kids. We would put a few rocks of carbide into a soda bottle, take a balloon, put a little water in it and put it over the mouth of the soda bottle. When the water hit the carbide, the acetylene gas formed and filled the balloon. We'd put the balloons on real long sticks and let the kids walk around in the crowd.

When a cigarette hit a balloon, the acetylene fired up into a great yellow ball of flame and singed the hand of the cigarette holder. It startled the crowd, but they thought it was just part of the fair.

Yes, St. John's made money at the fair, but we had a good time helping them keep the bullies in check.

As we grew older, there were summer jobs outside the community. These brought in a whole

lot more money for dating and some was put into college funds. These later jobs were much more lucrative but they never seemed to have the same creative level of entrepreneurship as the ones we made up and participated in as kids.



The old swimming hole at the confluence of Lubber Run and Four Mile Run was a favorite gathering place for young people in Glencarlyn during the hot summer months in the

years before central air conditioning became the popular method for keeping cool. Photo taken in 1918; courtesy Arlington Historical Society



Originally a dammed up stream in the 1930's, Arlington Forest Pool took on the shape and size of a private community pool in the early 50's.



"Original" pool. Members and guests line up for the pool opening in June 1959. First opened @ 1953.



ARLINGTON FOREST POOL

Growing up in Glencarlyn was a life with many facets. It sort of reflected the weather in the Washington DC area – if you don't like it, wait a minute. By that I mean we had more changes to the small "way out of the way" county of Arlington in my lifetime than most areas in the US.

We started as a backwater to DC. We grew from a semi-rural landscape to an urban setting with sidewalks and dog

parks and metro and many of the other good and bad ideas and elements found in cities.

One such change from rural to urban area was “the pool.” When we started here, the family with the best “pool” was the Hickman’s. They lived in what is now the Long Branch Nature center. Their magnificent 1,200 square foot mansion stood on a shelf overlooking the brook with a view into a verdant glade of trees and mountain laurel probably untouched since the Indians ran the show. There is a natural basin in the stream right at the curve of the stream which was the “Hickman pool”. This is just upstream from where the bike trail crosses the stream in front of the Long Branch Nature Center and is still used by children of all ages today.

We had our own shallow pool about seventy five feet lower and spent many a sweltering summer afternoon sharing the cool water with water skippers tadpoles and the occasional exciting wolf spider (big hairy spiders that build a home underwater and appear right next to you when you disturb their home).

In the 30’s there was a stream that ran through the area where Arlington Forest Pool now exist. Back then the stream was blocked to form a pool and a nickel was charged to ‘swim’ there. I’ve been told ‘swimming’ consisted of submerging yourself in the cooling waters and just getting over the heat of our glorious summers in Arlington for a short time.

In the early fifties it was decided there should be a real pool in this bucolic three acre glade. A club was formed, members solicited (now up to 675), dues collected and a pool was designed. This pool was based on the original idea of ‘a place to get cool’ in the summer. The pool was a compromise of goals. It didn’t conform to any standard but was about 33 1/3 meters long and about 18 meters wide. The shallow end was two and a half feet deep so that kids could safely play while the parents watched from the sun deck. The deep end was 12’ for the diving boards (both a high and low board).

This was a pool for ‘bobbies’ or a place to cool down. There were no “lane lines” at first. The idea was to maximize the amount of water for the foot-

print with no thought to competitive water activities. It was the wrong length for racing and, many folks felt, too shallow for the flip turn that became de rigueur in 1965 after the rules changed for free style swimming (before then you had to touch the wall with your hand when you turned).

I will say this for the shallow end – you learned how to do tight flip turns or scraped your head. Some folks said it was impossible to do a turn that tight. At 6’4” I quickly learned how to do a tight turn (after losing part of my hair to the cement bottom).

The families of Arlington Forest and Glen-carlyn flocked to the cooling waters of the new pool. It was a community pool and, as a member, you were expected to help when needed. I was an early contributor to the pools’ creation and maintenance. When cleaning up the area between the parking lot and Carlin Springs Road, I was lucky enough to find a rusty 38 caliber pistol in the undergrowth. This was turned over to the police who theorized the weapon was probably used for some nefarious purpose. We never heard whether that was true or not.

This tradition of members keeping the pool in good shape has continued. Frank Reynolds has been a long time “mower of the grass.” When you look at the steep slopes around the pool, you know Frank had his work cut out for himself.

The pool has never been heated. In the spring, children would swim until their lips turned blue. Of course we didn’t have goggles either (goggles began to be ‘acceptable wear’ in the 70’s), so our eyes turned red as well. We loved it!

The pool would get to the point of overflowing with people on those summer days when the weather was just TOO hot. There wasn’t much air conditioning so it was sweat or swim. Swimming was much more fun. A snack bar, children’s pool, playground, tennis courts, basketball half court, volley ball “court” and picnic area were added as time went on.

We three boys would decide to go swim-

ming and cool down. We would leave the house and walk down through the woods and back up to the pool. We would spend an afternoon at the pool diving from the high dive or just swimming and splashing and then walk home.

By the time we got home we would be just as hot as when we started but smell like chlorine and have red eyes too.

When the swimming competition began, there was a good group of swimmers and the pool competed competently. When we were the host team, it would confuse the visiting team to be confronted with an odd distance pool and a very shallow area for flip turns. When you practice for a race in a standard pool, your rhythm gets adjusted to a certain distance. We would have races that would run three lengths (for 100 meters) and the fifty meter races were hard to call because the length of the pool was 33 1/3 meters. The full fifty meter race was completed by swimming one and a half lengths – very confusing!

Finally it was determined the pool should be revamped. A new 25 meter pool was designed and completed in 2010. The next step for this pool was a new pool house costing the club in excess of \$1.5 mill. The old bath house and life guard “house” had reached its service life margin and needed either substantial renovation (due to

plumbing problems etc.) or be replaced. The membership opted for plan “B”.

Over the years the pool has changed but the same patterns emerge. The shy girl of last year has gone through the metamorphosis of puberty and walks proudly around the pool, occasionally looking down at her gifts from the gods.

The scrawny boys of last year are now taller, straighter, and vie for attention of the girls by playing basketball or dunking the girls. Laughter, fun, summer love, heartbreak – and it will be the same next year with a new set of wonderful folks!

As children we hated “Sunday Adult Swim Only.” It has now become an oasis of adult conversations and relaxation unfettered with the yelling of “Marco Polo” and skipping “wet balls” and “torpedos.”

On Thursday mornings there is the counterpart for children with a “float day.” If you’ve never been you owe it to yourself (at least once) to see the children overflow the pool with all manner of floating devices, yelling and splashing and having a ball while the life guards do their best to keep everyone safe.

Air conditioning has lessened the need for this most natural form of human cooling but on a hot summer afternoon, you can still find the Arlington Forest pool at maxi-

imum capacity with children of all ages enjoying the pool as a wonderful convivial cool oasis.



The new pool bath houses completed in 2012—ready for the summer.



Picture taken at the airport in 1950's. One of the most popular airports in the DC area even if you had to "hop" over the power lines and drive in theater on the way in and out.

VV 12/2010



WASHINGTON – VIRGINIA (BAILEY'S CROSS- ROADS) AIRPORT.

It was the usual hot steamy summer evening with the crickets and frogs having a wonderful time vying for vocal supremacy in the after ten time slot. The copper screens on the back porch were not bothered by any wind – there was none.

Through the woods I could see the lights down at the Hickman house. As I lay there, a pair of car lights came up through the top of the trees – impossible! They kept coming at tree top level then the roar of the small airplane right over the house. Ahhh! The Mystery is explained. The

lights were from another small late night plane taking longer than usual to get up to altitude from the Bailey's Crossroads' Airport.

This airport was started just after World War II and was in full operation by 1947. It had two runways of gravel which were later paved, (the longest over 2800 feet) that would accommodate small to some medium sized airplanes. It was opened and run by the Benn brothers

(their mother lived in the Burdette house on Third and Kensington St). The Benn Brothers ran this very popular airport and training school for over twenty five years at the location of Carlin Springs road and Route 7 (the location of the Skyline Towers buildings today. More on that later).

The popularity of the airport had to do with the proximity to the Pentagon and Washington DC. In 1960 it was noted as one of the most active airports in the Washington area with over 100 planes calling it home.

The airport was used for demonstrations, at times, for the Pentagon procurement office. The French jet helicopter, the Alouette, several American built helicopters and Piper planes among others were demonstrated there. The airport also had visitors including the Goodyear Blimp at least once a year.

Were there mishaps and amusing stories that could be told? Some better known stories have to do with the golf driving range across Route 7, the drive in movie theatre, and the proximity of commercial buildings and power lines. All can be dangerous to airplanes for different reasons.

The golf driving range was a menace because of the erratic quality of the patrons. Some of the small planes used material other than metal for the wings and fuselage. A golf ball from a semi-expert

exuberant golfer on the driving range could (and did) punch holes in the wings of some of the small planes. The golfers NEVER came to retrieve their lost golf balls.

The coke bottling plant (still there) was once the recipient of a small aircraft landing on its roof thinking it was the airport. The plant subsequently painted large "X's" on their roof to stop that from happening again.

On approach from the north, planes had to clear the 42' high drive - in theater screen. On one approach a plane was a little low and its landing tires left a pair of rubber skid marks on the top of the cement screen.

Another plane came in low and tangled in the high power lines along Route 7. The lines and air-plane came down on the fence around the airport and electrified the fence leading to welding one gate closed, blowing the landing lights at the airport, and, somehow, getting power into one of the water fountains in the terminal.

During the filming of the movie "Tora, Tora, Tora," six planes made to look like Japanese "Zeros" landed at the airport. One of the planes tore off a wing during the landing.

Another time a plane lost its engine which landed (the engine) in the Toys R Us parking lot. No one was killed in ANY of these accidents.

With the suburbs creeping into the area, more commercial buildings sprouting up, the neighborhood's mounting concerns over noise and mishaps, and the huge taxes involved with the land, the Benn's closed the airport on 10/18/1970 and went into a partnership with the Charles E. Smith Construction Firm. This partnership built the Sky-line office and apartment building complex where the airport once stood.

For 25 years the airport had operated with no fatalities. As the office and apartment building complex was being built, the cement was poured on an upper floor before the lower floor had time for proper curing to take place. One summer after-

noon, as I worked in the Bailey's Crossroads area, we heard a loud "BAM!" then a short silence, followed by another "BAM!" louder. Then another and another and another "BAM!" in a faster tempo followed by silence. The top floor had collapsed on the second top floor and caused the entire structure to "pancake" to the foundation killing 14 construction workers. For 25 years the airport had operated without fatalities and then when it was converted, fate stepped in.

How did the end of the airport at Bailey's Crossroads affect Glencarlyn? There are no more lights in the trees in the evening or sounds of small planes during the day on into the evening from THAT airport. The close - in convenience of the local airport is gone as well as the fun of watching the small plane traffic come and go. There is one reminder of the old airport, for those observant enough. On top of the Burke and Herbert bank (next to the Bank of America on Seminary Rd.) there are a pair of the old landing lights (non-functional) as one of the last reminders of an airport that once was. And, of course, the "X'S" on the top of the Coke plant were painted out years ago.



Arial view of Alexandria Coca Cola plant—now without its 'X's' on the roof.



Jackie Myers' 1950 Hudson Hornet



Mr. Walsh's Chrysler experimental turbine car



Gratuitous picture of author and brother Alan, taken in 2007 in 1963 'vette.

CARS!



We started as a small community using the rail line to get into DC. In the very early days (1800's) we were known as a farming area with produce for the city and lousy roads (please see **The Last Dirt Road** P11) . Before Kenmore (Glencarlyn Elementary school before that) was built the land was a dairy farm with the farmhouse still located on the north side of route 50.

When we went from being a part of Alexandria to a county of our own (Arlington) in the 1920's (and we had all the streets renamed but not paved), the area began to grow and houses really started to appear on the old farms.

Glencarlyn was late to develop. Our housing spurt didn't occur until the mid 40's and the war effort., even though we had been in existence since 1832. We continued to grow at a faster rate into the late 50's (thus the eclectic housing designs).

During this time, transportation shifted from the rails to automobiles. This was a time when GM had the idea of "helping" the country (and themselves) by persuading everyone to get a car, and municipalities were persuaded to get rid of old fashioned stuff like trolleys and trains and get (GM) buses. Georgetown was one area that opted out of the old trolleys and got buses. Can you imagine Georgetown with a trolley system like San Francisco? It would have been great!

But we were convinced. We bought cars. Most folks in Glencarlyn had one car per family. Going in and out of Glencarlyn was no big deal. There just weren't that many cars to dodge parked on the street. The streets, now paved, weren't great but there weren't many cars on them.

We owned a treasured brown '49 Plymouth

station wagon – the mini van of its year, with a rusted out back floor. We used it to go camping in the Blue Ridge Mountains, commute to the bus for Dad, and puppet shows. It lasted until 1960 when Billy (my older brother) took it out on Route 50 and wound up 2nd gear, blew the muffler and, through the hole in the back floor, caught the back seat on fire. That's when Dad bought the '58 VW bus.

My aunts had a green '51 Plymouth six cylinder three speed, very low mileage, garage kept sedan that I lusted after for years – no such luck. They gave the beauty to our cousin in Alexandria.

Jackie Myers had a six cylinder 1950 Hudson Hornet (pictured above). It was fast (turbocharged) with a positraction rear end that was a marvel in the snow. He could go anywhere quickly with that machine. He worked over at the Buckingham Movie Theater (now the post office) for a year or so. One day, during his shift, one of the other employees there breathlessly told Jackie someone had hit his car parked across the street at the Drug Fair (now CVS). Jackie rushed out to find a new (1961) Oldsmobile sedan, had jumped the curb and rear ended his Hudson locking bumpers with it. The fellow in the Olds was furiously burning rubber in reverse trying to escape with no luck. The Hudson wouldn't budge! Jackie watched as the Oldsmobile's tires burned up until the police got there and arrested the miscreant. There was no damage to the Hudson. The Olds had a smashed front end and burned up rear tires.

Jay Collier who lived on Fifth Road and Jefferson St. had a brand new Chevy "409," positraction, four speed muscle car that he babied. He dated Sue Bercat for a while. She lived on Lexington and 2nd St. Jay let Sue drive the car. Sue mostly babied the car too. She got mad at Jay one afternoon. The next day there was a twenty foot "burn out" from the right tire followed by another twenty foot "burn out" from the left tire (positraction!) on Lexington Street from 5th to 3rd St. where Sue put her foot into the "409".

Bob Chew, a good friend from Arlington Forest, loved his GTO's. He had at least three new

ones (one after another) that he would race as well as drive around town. He'd change the rear end ratios and take it to Aquasco Race track on the weekends. All Bob's cars were FAST cars! Bob would tape a twenty dollar bill on the dashboard of the car and let anyone take it if they could lean forward and get it while he went through the gears. The "G" force of his acceleration was such that no one got the money.

Aside from these fast cars, we had some unique cars that made life interesting. Mr. Walsh, who lived on 1st Street, was given the opportunity to test drive the Chrysler experimental turbine car for a year (above). This was a prototype (one of 50 produced) designed in Italy and given to him to test drive. It had a turbine engine and would "whoosh" by us. The gas millage was lousy but it flew! That's what his son, Frank told us, anyway.

Pete Daniels lived on 4th and Jefferson and had a Model "T" Ford. He would get it out and drive around the neighborhood to announce the Pancake Breakfast each year blowing the ever popular 'Aaaaaaoooooggaaaaa' horn to announce the spe-



Pete Daniels' Model "T" at Pancake breakfast.

cial
day.

Captain Shepherd had a Model "A" Ford (manufactured from 1929-1931) that also had been modified although seldom used. The top speed on that car was supposed to be in the 50mph range. After Captain Shepherd modified the rear end, it could roll along at 70mph which surprised many folks on the interstates in the late 50's.

Eric Carlson had a '37 Dodge three speed (pictured above) that we drove to New York City among other adventures. Eric kept that car in top notch shape. One interesting feature was the "crank out windshield". This feature allowed the windshield to be cranked open and the breeze (and bugs) would blow through the car. This was 1937 air conditioning.

One evening Eric, Eddie and I triple dated and were driving down Glebe Road by the Drug Fair on Glebe and Pershing Drive. We were stopped at the light when Eric saw a car come right at us from the rear. He yelled just before it hit us at over thirty miles per hour. The girls were screaming but the spring bumper on the '37 took most of the impact and the high backed seats absorbed the rest of the crash with only a small ding in the trunk of the '37. The Buick that hit us (the driver was drunk) was totaled.

Carl Schulez, who lived on the corner across from the 7-11, owned a '39 Dodge. It was in perfect shape. In the early 70's he was driving a load of old photographic materials to a farm in southern VA to blow up a beaver pond. How could that be? His old photo material, at that time, deteriorated into many things including nitroglycerin. Carl had a back seat loaded with this stuff and was driving VERY CAREFULLY on Route 95 south. The officer who pulled him over said he did so because he just KNEW such an old crate had to be unsafe. After looking at the tires, testing the shocks and steering, he let Carl go about his business. Carl knew the car was ok but if the officer had known what was in the back seat, Carl would probably be seen as an unwelcome driver on the interstate. Or anywhere else! Fact is, Carl was a little scared when the officer pushed hard on the bumper to test the shocks. The beavers learned later that day just how dangerous that load was.

McClerran (he lived in Glencarlyn on the other side of Kenmore) worked on his parent's brand new Olds. He took off the two barrel, put on a four barrel, changed the rear end ratios and did a few other non warranty adjustments. He would sneak off to Aquasco on the weekend and race it.

All was well 'til his mom got into a tight spot at a stop light and hit the accelerator hard. She smoked the tires for fifty feet. She WAS impressed! McClerran had to put it ALL back to stock. No more Aquasco!

What did it take to keep cars going? There was the maintenance to keep the engine running right (points, plugs, distributor caps, timing, timing advancement, vacuum hoses, dwell, valve clearance etc.). Then there was a whole other part keeping the car looking good – "simonizing" of the paint - a very labor intensive process of applying wax smoothly to all surfaces and then carefully hand buffing the wax to a uniform deep gloss finish.

We all learned how to change the oil, clean and adjust the points and even change engines in Volkswagens with a log and a 2 by 12 as a lift. (Please see **Manly Test** P111)

With today's cars you can take so many things for granted. Back then, cars were labor intensive machines that gave you freedom and a sense of pride - for a price.

cember 20th to the 23rd, depending on the year).

In the 50's, the leaves would have been taken care of mostly by then (either neatly raked and stored or, mother nature blew them into the woods), and the house would be winterized (we would take off the summer screens and put on the winter storm windows).

We knew it was Christmas time when Dad would load us into



Captain Shepherd built this in the 1960's and took the award for the best original Christmas decorations until the GCA retired the award. The house and decorations were truly unique.

the '49 Plymouth station wagon and head to the country. We could cut our own tree, strap it to the top of the old brown '49 Plymouth station wagon and haul it back home.

The village had a yearly contest to see who could decorate their house the most imaginatively. The judges were an incorruptible team selected by the Citizen's Association to judge who had the most unique display for Christmas. A small (but significant) non monetary prize would then be handed out at the after Christmas Association meeting. Captain and Mrs. Shepherd won several years in a row with the three shepherds motif (which can still be seen this year. Captain Shepherd, with the help of Jerry Martineau, continue the tradition).

This traditional competition was allowed to lapse sometime in the '70's, and was superseded by the Luminaria, which was started by Barry Stevens. He was the man who originally came up with the idea, and like all good ideas, stood behind it by



VV 12/2009

CHRIST- MAS IN THE VILLAGE

December is mostly cold and dark with the sparkle of the Christmas lights and all the tumult of the holiday. Christmas comes a few days after the longest night of the year (the winter Solstice, De-

getting the materials together and distributing them to participating neighbors before Christmas. Today, Paul Nuhn, Pete Olivier, Jack Turner, and many others have volunteered their time and effort to make this very lovely, peaceful scene take place in Glencarlyn.

It's something to see – long streets outlined with the flickering lights of candles in the translucent “penny” shopping bags. Sometime in the future, it has been rumored, we will get a nice layer of snow to help accent this new neighborhood tradition.

There was a large pine tree in front of the old wooden St. John's church that would be decorated with lights each year. The trick was to take a long stick and put the last few light bulbs in the string at the top. My father was good at doing this last touch.

The village didn't have a Christmas party for the children, that I remember (as we now have at Carlin Hall), but there were private parties where neighbors would get together and have some wassle (spiced cider – the spices being cloves and cinnamon). Mr. Daneils, who lived over on 3rd Street, had a wonderful egg - nog recipe. His recipe called for fresh eggs and lots of cream and his spices were a little more ... adult spicely than the wassle, and not for the children.

Our family tradition was started by our Grandmother Backus in the 30's. On Christmas Eve, our family would gather before the fireplace and make “Christmas hangings.” These were comprised of sprigs of pine, holly, and other greens of the season. We then attached a tag to say “Merry Christmas” to our friends, and then deliver these later on Christmas Eve.

Most friends would let us do our evening delivery with no interruption. Mr. Daniels would stay up and play the piano until he would “catch” Dad or one of us and offer us some egg nog. We worked hard on being “caught” by Mr. Daniels.

The last delivery took place at the Carlsons. They always have the coffee and good Christmas

cheer waiting for us, if we got caught. Sometimes we had to knock loudly to get caught .

It's a lot more work to do the greens over Christmas cards, but greens have been our family tradition since the 30's.

The regular family Christmas gifts we exchanged at Christmas were not extravagant in the Village. The most expensive gifts in the neighborhood would be a bicycle or two among all the kids of Glencarlyn, but nothing much greater than that.

The cold biting air, the smell of wood smoke (my great Aunt Constance and great Aunt Hadasah had a wood stove in their kitchen in the house on the corner of 5th and Illinois St.). The smell of wood smoke and the aroma of the Christmas turkey – that's what I remember. The turkey would go into the oven after the breakfast (very modified breakfast) because we usually had candy - chocolate covered cherries under the tree - and a bunch of Hersey's Kisses in the stockings before my parents could get down to the tree. Mother always tried to add a few oranges or an apple to the stockings, but the fruit was still there in the stockings when candy wrappers were everywhere else.

Dad must have been part German. He believed we should all sit around and open each gift so everyone could share in the excitement. This was done in a very orderly fashion. None of this pell mell grab a gift and rip it apart. Mother would try to save the wrappings for next year. That never really worked out too well. We were three boys and paper was not going to stand in the way of the gift. We did have to be careful about the paper in one way – the fire was going in the fireplace during the gift opening ceremony.

There are some gifts that live on in infamy forever. Mine was chocolate covered cherries. I got those every year even after I had grown very weary of the delicacy. My younger brother, Alan, hated the infamous paddle ball – a rubber ball attached to a paddle by a long rubber band. Every year he got it – every year he hated it. Wonder where I can find one of those now?

Christmas day was a very quiet day in the village. It was a day for the family. The packages were opened and food was eaten and then, after a quick trip to church, the mid – afternoon meal with the great Aunts, Aunt Constance and Aunt Hadasah and our family (and sometimes a friend who couldn't get home for the holidays). Occasionally we would get out to tell our friends about our new toys. I got a set of Hopalong Cassidy pistols for Christmas one year. I went out to tell my friends about my new treasures. It must have been about twenty degrees out. I pulled out the right pistol (cap gun), pulled the trigger and the hammer hit the cap and Broke off! It was too cold and the base metal hammer just snapped off.

I stood there feeling so bad. It couldn't be! So I pulled out my left pistol and started to pull the trigger on it. Almost ruined both of them. The right one still looked pretty good but it was no longer functional. It did save me a lot of money on caps.

Always the rush to get the shopping done, the planning for parties, the lights all up, the cards all sent and the inevitable let down after all the hub – bub. Then the chore of taking down the tree, packing the lights away and dragging the tree up to Kenmore for the Twelfth Night Christmas tree burning (described in an earlier article). Until the county decided our pyromaniac ideas for disposing of the trees after Christmas were not a good idea, this gave us the after Christmas lift we needed to keep looking forward to the next exciting event in the village.



Just like they owned the place! Seldom seen in the 50's through the 90's, deer are the new neighbors (and they love Azaleas and other lawn shrubs).



VV 6/2010

CRITTERS

There were (and are) all sorts of wonderful bugs and animals here. The squirrels were the most numerous, pesky and never caught (almost never).

But there were other wondrous creatures. Rabbits, birds, snakes, turtles, salamanders, walking sticks, praying mantis, flying squirrels, raccoons, once or twice a few deer, a ground hog, box turtles and assorted other curious visitors (actually residents) of our early community.

The two streams that run on either side of the neighborhood with their other small tributaries and meet just below the George Washington marker, were and are a very attractive and peaceful setting for our wildlife. Each stream had its own ecosystem. The one that flows down from Bon Aire and

Lubber Run, seemed the more murky. The sand had more sediment in it, although the flow of water was a third more than the Long Branch stream (on the south side of the village) that runs down from the Seven Corners area.

We built dams on both streams using logs and stones and other assorted "local organic" material available from the very close by areas. We were lazy and primarily built the dams for our amusement and to make a large enough pool to swim in, the only air-conditioning

we had.

When building a dam, there were always "water skippers." These four legged bugs floated on the top of the water and scooted around on the surface tension lazing in the sun and enjoying their lives. In the water were the crayfish (little shrimp like animals that lived under the rocks of the stream and were very shy). We would move rocks to make the dams or just to see what was there. About every fifth rock would be the resting place of a crayfish. When we moved "their" rock, they would scoot for another place of shelter.

Tadpols (the pre – frog amphibians) were in abundance (you can see them down at Willow Point by the bike trail today). There were also minnows. They never grew very big but you could see them in little schools in deeper shady areas of the streams.

The WORST critter I ran into in the water was the Wolf spider. These little devils grab a bunch of air and dive under water and build a nest at the bottom of the pool. We'd be building a dam and I'd grab an underwater rock and the next thing I'd see is this 2" black hairy spider floating on top of the water right next to me. This usually led to my "walking on water" routine to get out of the stream. I was told they didn't bite and were good for the

stream. Fat chance I'd believe that!

Box turtles and rabbits. The rabbits were furry and cute and very reproductive. My great aunts had a running battle with these destroyers of their gardens. They did look cute (the rabbits). They ate a great deal of the vegetables and some of the flowers and they either dug under or leaped over the chicken wire fences my aunts put up.

The box turtles were also a problem. They just slowly trudged into the garden and ate strawberries. A low fence kept them at bay, most of the time.

Praying mantis and walking sticks were always fun. A walking stick is just that. It looks like a stick with scrawny legs sticking out. It's slow but it does eat small insects and is good for the garden.

The praying mantis is a protected bug in Virginia. It's illegal to kill it. They come in brown cocoons which can sometimes be found on the tips of fresh Christmas trees. If you find one on a Christmas tree, take it carefully off and put it in the garden (on a bush using some grocery store ties). If you don't you might end up with more at Christmas (or before) than you had bargained for.

I took a praying mantis cocoon in to show my science teacher in Kenmore. Afterward I put it in my locker and forgot it. In the back of the school lockers, there are (or were) small air holes. Over a long weekend, with the warm school temperature, the cocoon felt like summer had come and hatched. When I got to school on Monday, the first hint of trouble came from the screaming up and down the hall for fifty feet on either side of my locker. There must be a thousand little praying mantis in one of those cocoons. And they all hatched that weekend and went exploring. We had many law breakers on that Monday morning. Nobody ever figured out who the perpetrator was.

Probably the most intrusive critters we ran into were the raccoons. These urban adaptors lived trouble free in our neighborhood (and still do). One crisp winter morning my family was in the dining room at breakfast when we heard some strange

noises from the living room. We went in and found a twenty pound raccoon on the built-in bookshelves. It had fallen down or climbed down the chimney and had found a new warm home. It stood its ground on the bookshelves and hissing and making all sorts of terrible noises pelted us with the Harvard collection of Classic literature and several volumes of the World Book Encyclopedia. After an hour of negotiation (with a broom and a lot of yelling), we finally convinced the raccoon to leave the house by the open front door. It slowly climbed down from the shelves and sauntered out the front door like an affronted house guest. Dad added a chimney guard the next weekend.

Bees and wasps and yellow jackets have been a perennial pain in this area. A yellow jacketed wasp will swoop down and sting you "just 'cause." You would walk into the garage or around the corner of the house and get stung. Not fun. Dad was not amused. If you were quick you could poke a stick at the nest then run like crazy and that would get rid of them.

Black wasps would build nest under the eaves of our old house. If you opened a window to get some air in the summer (our only form of air conditioning), they would sometimes fly in. This was not acceptable. A long stick out the window to poke down their nest was somewhat dangerous. Over time we developed a long stick with a cherry bomb with a small piece of phono wire drilled through it. We'd put this contraption out the window into the nest. The wasps would all swarm but after awhile they would settle. Then we plugged the extension cord into the wall. This method of wasp removal has not been written about very much and I pass it on as one of the more unique ways of taking care of wasps.

Yellow jackets were a real pain. I'd be mowing the lawn, minding my own business when all of sudden I'd be surrounded by these little devils stinging me. We tried the usual solution; fire crackers, cherry bombs and finally, not mowing that area of the lawn. In later years someone finally gave me the solution. Wait 'til after dark, when they all go back to the nest, and pour a teaspoon of gasoline

down the hole. No more problems with that nest – ever. I asked someone why this worked. They told me the bees “ran out of gas.”

Sometime in this new century the “critter” landscape has changed. We don’t have minnows or crayfish. No more water skippers. The frogs are not a vocal presence any longer. The squirrels are less numerous and the rabbits and turtles are less abundant. The wasps and hornets and yellow jackets seem fewer. However we do have an influx of deer, foxes, a few ducks on the stream, a ground hog and someone said they saw a coyote. The foxes are probably responsible for our declining rabbit and squirrel population. The Raccoons are as prevalent and obstreperous as ever. We still have the sublime beauty of the southern nights instead of the northern lights. Southern nights are mild, calm and filled with the rising curtain of lightening bugs. Glencarlyn is still the “Urban Wild Kingdom.”



DOBSON: THE MAN WHO COULD DO ANYTHING.

My Aunts would need work done around the house and, when we were small, Dobson was the man who did the odd jobs that needed doing. He could use a scythe in the long grass behind the house, or mow the lawn, clean a gutter, cut down a tree, mend a fence or build a shed. He was a man of many talents.

Dobson was a black man who rode up from McLean on his bicycle every day and worked in the Glen Carlyn community for all the folks that needed something done. He was a kind man who enjoyed his work and, I think, really looked after his clientele. His bicycle was a piece of artwork. It had one speed, wide tires and was adorned with some odd things Dobson had added to give him comfort and safety. The main things I remember were a wide comfortable seat, a lantern on the back (for riding home late in the evening) and, I think, a light in the front.

He got to work early in the morning and nothing was too large, or too small for him to handle. He worked at one pace that would eat up any job quickly but seemingly without a great deal of

effort on his part. It looked easy until you tried to do the job yourself.

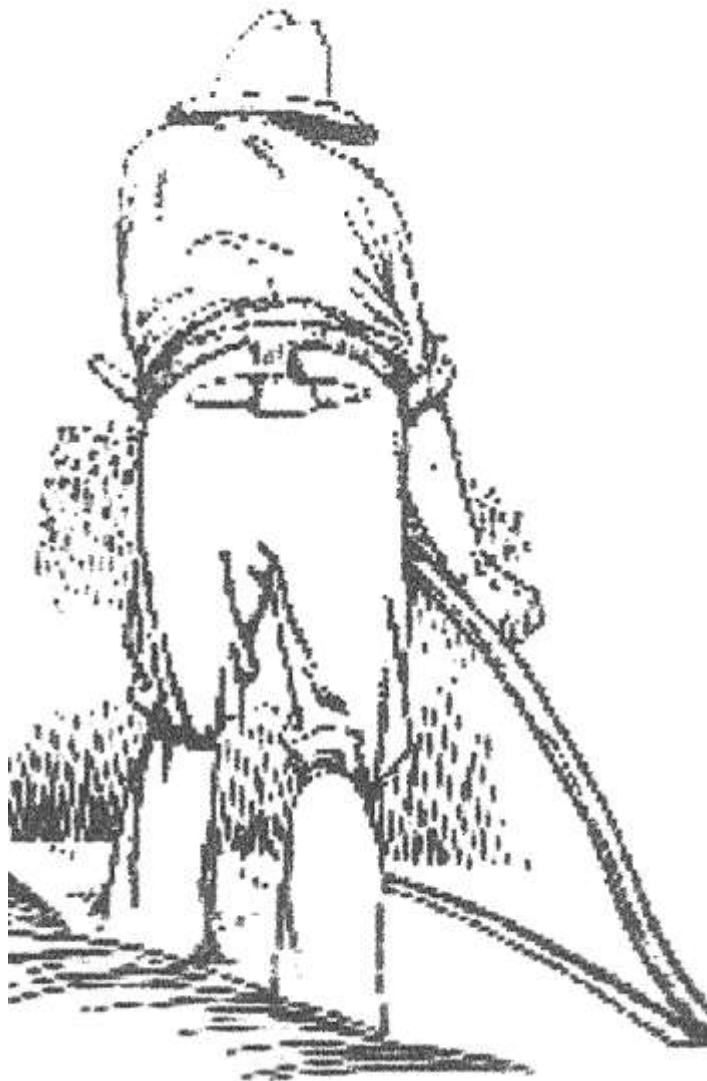
Once he was scything the field behind the Aunties (5500 S. 5th St.) house (this is an acre or so in size) and would just seem to glide through the tall grass, cutting in great swaths as he walked. Being a young boy and wanting to know how easy it was to do the job, I asked to try a little myself. He gave the scythe to me after I had watched him do the job for some time. The scythe instantly changed from the magic tool of grass leveling to an unwieldy, cumbersome sharp instrument that I was sure would sever my feet from my legs at any minute. I carefully gave it back to Dobson who smiled broadly, took it up and continued to work his way down the field with a grace and style that I could now fully appreciate.

I remember him as a very tolerant and hard working man who seemed content with helping the folks of Glen Carlyn. When I was about eight my folks told me that Dobson had been hit by a driver as he was peddling his way back home on a late evening. He died of the injuries sustained in the accident.

AUNT CONSTANCE AND AUNT HADASSAH

These two wonderful people lived next door to us. They had the house on the corner of 5th and Illinois street (5500 S. 5th St.) They had been school teachers and were two of the nicest people in the neighborhood. The old

wooden frame house was a wonderful place to go and visit on a cold morning or during the summer, or anytime.



Aunt Constance was the more strait laced one of the two. She was the no nonsense teacher that probably would have made Icabod Crane (of the headless horseman fame) look like a model. She was kind but also stern. She knew that little boys should be tolerated, but only to a certain point.

The first I remember about them was their two little Scotty dogs. These were great little brave creatures that could stalk a squirrel and give great noisy chases. As they got older, Aunt Hadassah would say that they should buy a roller skate for the little rascals because their tummies were getting so big they might drag on the ground! She would say this with a straight face and then laugh.

Aunt Hadassah! What a delightful woman. She always seemed to have a twinkle in her eye. Life was a joy that you wanted her to share with you. She knew something that made life a wonderful secret. Always she seemed to be happy – at worst content, with the wonderful things around her.

Different? Certainly! Aunt Hadassah loved her garden. She grew all the vegetables you could imagine. Corn, beans, asparagus, blackberries, raspberries, tomatoes, cabbage, rhubarb, lettuce, If it grew in the ground in Virginia, and it might be good to eat, she had it planted and it grew won-

derfully! Everything but ochre was in her garden. Why her interest in vegetables? She had diabetes and would not allow herself to ever become dependent on insulin. She took care of her problem with one of the greatest gardens in the county. It was large and she kept it perfect!

Aunt Constance, on the other hand, had the greatest assortment of flowers imaginable. She grew the "Bleeding Heart" the roses, the irises, the mums, the big and the small flowers, the most fragrant scents to the spectacularly beautiful with no scent. She had them all! And this was right next door to our house.

Can you imagine being invited to go over and pick fresh asparagus in the evening and feel this was a chore? We had been jaded by this veritable Garden of Eden next door.

What kind of fertilizer was there for this? This was the best compost in the county. We would rake up bushels of leaves

out of the two yards and carry the leaves down to a three bin area. The Aunties had Dobson make three large fenced in areas. They were twenty feet square, each. Into these bins we would load one year's leaves. The first bin the first year etc. so that we had a three year cycle going. The first year, after the great bundle had been gathered (and that was a real chore) the Aunties would treat the bin with lime and then all that year we would put the



Mrs. Connie Backus circa 1960—photo by Jane Terry

garbage into the bin. This meant you dug a hole in the leaves, put the left over egg shells, rinds, etc. from the meals into the leaves, then put in some lime and cover this with leaves. At the end of the year, after the new leaves had been put into the next bin, that first bin would lay fallow for a year and continue to decay. The third year it was ready to be spread onto the garden to help the rich vegetables and magnificent flowers grow to their wonderful delightful (and delicious) sizes.

Aunt Constance loved her roses. I remember one year she found me picking a rose for mother and she chastised me for not asking before picking. I felt ashamed and felt bad for a week. Later she told mother that it was a peace rose. When I tried to pick it, it certainly broke the peace at home!

The Aunties had inherited the house and the property around it. The property encompassed the land across the street on both sides of Illinois street as well as the acre or so behind the 5500 S. 5th St. house. It also covered three quarters of the way down the block to Jefferson street on the south side of 5th St.

As time went on, and the cost of living got more expensive for the two aging retired teachers, they found ways to keep up with most things.

I remember going into their kitchen on a cold morning and finding Aunt Hadassah building a fire in the old wood stove in the middle of the kitchen with the wood that Dobson had cut. She would put on the pot on top of it and get the coffee going. Aunt Constance would come down in a little while and have her coffee and the day would start.

In the evening, particularly in the summer, Mr. Adler would walk down from his house at the corner of Illinois and 3rd St. to play the piano in the living room of the Aunties house. He had white hair that seemed like that of Albert Einstein and had one of the nicest personalities you could imagine. He was kind to children and dogs and anyone or anything else you could imagine. He would do magic tricks (pulling a coin from behind an ear of a child) or show you how he could manipulate a coin in his fingers up and down the scale of his fingers effortlessly.

His music would fill the air in the spring and summer when the windows at the Aunties would be open to let the air conditioning in (the only kind

we had back then). One evening that remains in my mind forever is the early summer with the field newly scythed (the fresh smell of cut grass), the wonderful scent of Aunt Constance's flowers (probably a mock orange), the sound of Mr. Adler playing on the piano with all the fervor of a man who truly loves the old master pieces, and the view of the field, shadowed by the darkness of the trees, with the lightening bugs beginning to emerge to flicker up and up into the dark foliage of the trees. Such a scene would make the backdrop of a great play or something that you want to hold to your heart and soul forever.

As time went on, the Aunties decided they had to move into a home with only one floor. They sold the tennis court and the other two lots south of Illinois St. on 5th St. to a developer and had a house built just down the street from the large old wood frame house. They both still had their respective gardens and continued their lives as usual.



was a cross between a husky and a few other smart handsome predecessors. His goal in life was to be happy and keep us protected, from man or beast. He was afraid of nothing and would attack the largest perceived enemy with a ferociousness that earned him respect and fear.

Two quick stories demonstrate the mixed feelings Pepper engendered. In elementary school, he saved my bacon. In Jr. high school, he cooked my goose.

When I was in elementary school, we decided to go swimming in the stream (Long Branch) behind the house and down a way. This was a spontaneous event (as was usual for us) and therefore did NOT include the wearing of swim attire. The three of us had been jumping from the large boulder that protruded into the

pool of water and splashing and having a good time when we spotted a family coming down into the park. We, of course, took refuge behind the boulder (no time to change into our summer clothing laying on the bank by the stream) As the fellow approached our sanctuary, we took hands full of sand and silt from the bottom of the pool and waved it around in the water in front of us to 'disguise' our lack of swim gear (or any other clothing, for that matter).

Pepper took a position on top of our boulder facing our pool of water. As this fellow approached, Pepper didn't even turn around to face him, but just started to growl deep in his throat. Pepper was mostly black with a white splash on his chest. He weighed about 45 lbs. and could look and act very serious. He didn't look like a good candidate to go a few rounds with unless he was in a good mood. At this point, he didn't seem to be in a good mood.

The fellow thought he would get closer to our embarrassing position with his family close behind. As he approached, Pepper got more vocal. The

Pepper, my wonder dog and companion of youth



DOGS

A boy and his dog. Man's best friend. Unconditional love from your pet. All true.

Yes, we had dogs when I was growing up. We tried cats but they didn't last for one reason or another. We had two dogs. The first, unfortunately, fell victim to an early illness and died. The second one we got from the pound was a wonderful dog that was our pal and protector and ... wonderful. His name was Pepper. He came from the Animal Rescue League and had been given up because his first parents were living in an apartment and couldn't keep him.

He was young, less than two years old, and

fellow tried the “good doggie” gambit but Pepper was having no parts of that. Finally the fellow stopped and said, rather loudly, “You fellows are going to catch your death of cold in that water.” He laughed, turned and left with his family in tow. We all breathed a sigh of relief and looked up at Pepper. He seemed to be smiling and his curved tail (sign of husky blood line) was wagging.

He also considered himself a lady’s man – so to speak, and embarrassed me to no end when he followed me to school in the fall one day. I had graduated to Kenmore Jr. High and, at that time, the classrooms were on “wings.” The school was all one level and there were extensions that went out from the main body of the school.

Pepper not only followed me to school one day but somehow found where I was in class. When I saw him in the courtyard next to the classroom, I pointed him out to Tom Follen, my good buddy. I was hoping Diane, a very attractive girl in the class, would also notice the handsome dog and realize I was a nice, dog - loving fellow.

Pepper got bored with just sitting out in the courtyard and after fifteen minutes of my math class decided he had better things to do. Good, I thought. Wish I could join him! He’s headed home. NOPE! In about five minutes he returned with a female dog and proceeded to ... well. When Tom looked over that way (I studiously avoided looking in that direction and drawing anyone’s attention in that direction) and Tom saw what was going on, he loudly announced to the class, “Hey David, isn’t that your dog?”

Everyone looked into the courtyard where Pepper was VERY busy. The teacher, Ms. Jones, was young and easily embarrassed. She tried to continue the class, becoming very red in the face, but everyone was laughing and carrying on and I was under my desk trying to find a pencil that somehow, had dropped to the floor in all the commotion. Later that year Diane told me she thought it was pretty funny too.

Pepper never barked. He could growl (which was sometimes good as noted above) and make

noise like someone was beating the devil out of him, but he would not bark. When he was happy it sounded like we were giving him the licking of his life. He would be jumping up and down around us and making all sorts of noise and the neighbors would be looking for the animal rescue league phone number.

Not barking was probably due to his being raised in an apartment. This was, for the most part, a good thing.

We were not the only ones in the neighborhood with a dog. Jay Collier had Teddy, the Carlsons had Sheeba, Henry Jarboe, our neighbor, had his hunting dogs, the Bakers (on Jefferson and 5th Rd.) had at least one dog, my great aunts had two wonderful Scottie terriers and there were several others in the neighborhood, at least.

My great Aunt Hadassah said of their two scotties, “If they get any chubbier, I’m going to have to get them roller skates for their tummies!” Then she laughed. She loved them.

Sheeba, owned by the Carlsons, decided one day that Eric Carlson and I were seriously fighting and got a tooth into my side. Eric and I were just fooling around. Sheeba wasn’t!

Jay’s dog and Pepper got into a scrap one day. Pepper was winning and Jay went in his house and got his .22 rifle and threatened to shoot Pepper. We finally got the dogs apart. No shots were fired.

Henry’s dogs were kept on “the point.” This was a piece of land that jutted out to what is now the Harrison St. cul de sac. Henry kept the dogs in a 20 X 20 fenced in area that had a kennel for the dogs in bad weather and he took them hunting at least once a month. The rest of the month the dogs got to be in the penned - in area and bark at the moon, strangers, at each other, or, in general anything they wanted to that amused them. This was their major source of entertainment – barking. They spent about six hours a day doing this, which was not fun for any of the neighbors (mainly us, since there were no other houses on 5th Street below Illi-

nois at that time on this side of the street). We would talk to Henry about this noise and he would say, "What do you expect me to do about it?" Henry felt his dog's barking wasn't his problem but ours.

The Baker's dog (or dogs), would join in the general vocal fracas from time to time and we could hear a "wonderful" stereo affect from the two sides of the property. The severity of this "symphony" varied depending on the weather, intruders or lack of other things to do. In the evenings, after a long day of vocal exercises, the dogs would usually settle down. Once or twice a month Henry's dogs would get wind of a raccoon, a skunk, or other critter and give great noisome alarm in the middle of the night. The Bakers would take their dogs in during the evening so we would only be listening to a one sided rendition after dark.

Arlington, at that time, did not have dog parks. When you took your dog for a walk, it was in the park or along the streets. You were supposed to clean up after your dog but few folks did. There were leash laws as well, but we seldom took Pepper off the property (unless he followed me to school which I made sure NEVER happened again!)

Pets are not cheap, although getting a pet can sometimes cost very little. A few years ago at the Arlington Fair, a fellow had a very cuddly group of kittens – 6 of them. He was selling them to the kids for a non refundable ticket each (\$.50). He started at 9am in the morning and was sold out five times during the day. Five times? How so? The kids would buy a cuddly kitten or two and take their new treasures to show to mom and dad and the beauties would soon be back to the original owner. He started the day with six kittens and ended the day with six kittens and a whole lot of tickets, which he cashed in! Of course there were not refunds!

What happened to all the dogs? Henry moved away taking his noisome retinue. The Bakers, likewise. Sheeba, Pepper, the Scotties, and Teddy all passed away. Pets are the most marvelous companions folks have in their lives. We love them and

care for them and they love us. A perfect relationship!



High above the rest of the world, my true confession!

TREE PROCLA- MATIONS



Any boy growing up in the neighborhood needed a few basic items. One was a good dog. About half the kids in the village had a dog of some kind. A bicycle was a must. You had to get around somehow. And a whittling knife.

Most of us joined the Boy Scouts when we got old enough. It was good fun and taught us how to get along together and helped the cause of “community contribution”. Since dad was an Eagle Scout, there was NO argument allowed concerning joining the scouts. Like going to school, it was a given.

Most of the neighborhood parents helped with the Scouts and it was the thing to do. As Boy Scouts, we learned knots, swimming, rudimentary boating, camping, fishing and an assortment of

her useful information for living. We had hikes through the woods, went camping in the Shenandoah, spelunking in West VA. and canoeing on the Potomac.

Having and using a knife was part of growing up in the Scouts. For that matter, most kids had one. You needed it to whittle tent pegs, shorten ropes, create snares (for survival techniques) and a host of other things.

A good knife had a blade of 3” to 4” long. A GREAT knife had a blade or two but also

had the other essentials like a small pair of scissors, a nail file, a “boring” tool, bottle opener, can opener, screw driver (both Phillips head and standard) as well as other assorted tools too numerous to recall. This knife was carried in the front pocket of your jeans. The “Swiss Army knife” (the one with all the extras), was obvious and impressive for a kid to have. It wasn’t ‘til later that we learned that it wasn’t fashionable to have such a device in your front pocket (for many reasons).

Most of us didn’t have Swiss Army knives. But we did get Boy Scout knives for scouting trips. These were two bladed affairs, one blade short and the other longer. My dad let me use his dad’s old painter’s knife – which had one 3 ½” blade and was an early switch blade (a spring loaded blade that could be opened with the push of a button). This was impressive – and later illegal. It was called a “painter’s knife” in my grandfather’s time because you could open it with one hand while your other hand was occupied doing something important like holding onto the ladder.

Yes, you could take your knife to school with

you. And, yes, we wore our Scout uniforms to school on the day of the meeting, even though the meetings were held at night. This was a good recruiting tool. My Scout uniform was the only real outfit that worked – i.e. looked like it was matched and proper.

On the way home from school, there were kids (not Scouts, I'm sure) that would carve the names of their true love (of the moment) into the smooth bark of the maple, sycamore or ash trees in the parks. As Scouts, we were admonished not do this sort of needless destruction of trees. It was harmful to the trees. My grandmother's quote was "Foolish names, like foolish faces, are often seen in public places!" She was definitely old school. Wonder what she would think of Facebook and Twitter?

There was a long running battle with the kids to stop this, but only time and changes of attitude and laws would cure the problem.

In the meantime, the park at the north end of Jefferson St. was the prime recipient of these carved public proclamations of love and fidelity. It was on the way home for many of the Kenmore Jr. High students with time on their hands, a knife at the ready and the object of their affection standing by watching the deed being done.

Now when a tree grows up, it grows from the top. This means that a carved inscription doesn't move higher up the tree, but, instead, gets wider and more distorted as the trunk grows wider. Over the years this led to many artfully carved intertwined hearts with arrows piercing them and initials on the hearts growing into grotesque distortions on these smooth barked trees. This may have been what happened to these relationships over the years as well. As far as I know, no one ever did any follow up studies on those early romances.

As time went on, the trees succumbed to ... whatever. Fewer and fewer of these smooth barked trees were left standing and the advent of "cooler" things and ways of saying "I really care for you" have saved the new crop of trees from this old destructive practice.

My own inscription – and yes I did carve one tree in my wild and tempestuous youth, was located in a spot my dad would never get to see. I was in luv with my Jr. high sweet heart. This was Plutonic since she moved to Maryland soon after I proclaimed my affections. We did burn up the phone lines (well, sort of) with sly innuendos and tentative phone Uh **Fun**, but never really got together during all that time to bring anything to fruition (thank goodness we no longer had the "party" phone lines of earlier years) .

Where was this engraved proclamation to the world? Knowing how my dad (the Eagle Scout) would feel about any despoiling of a tree, I climbed to the top of the maple tree located on the east side of the property. Wedged between a limb and the trunk of the tree, forty feet in the air, I carved her name and mine into the smooth bark. It was done with all the ardor and artistic talent I could muster (at 40' with my acrophobia). It was ... not great, but it did proclaim to the world (whoever climbed to the top of the maple tree, anyway), my true feelings!

When we had to cut down trees for the house renovation in 2003, the maple tree was one of the last trees to be felled. As we cut the tree up to be taken away, I spotted the swollen, distorted remains of my very early carving, still there, reminding me of a time and a person long ago.



Judy Funderburk, Paul Nuhn , David Backus, and Pete Olivere (taking photo) search in vain for old well at Carlin Hall November 2008.

nderful stop on the railroad line from Wash-
ton, DC.

The original business plan was interesting
t there were two major flaws. Both of these
ws had to do with the basic utilities – not
wer but water and sewer. Electricity wasn't a
blem—there was none!

Water! The size of the lots limits the number
wells that can effectively yield the amount of
ter a family requires these days (200,000 gal-
s per quarter). We are fortunate to be in a
d where there is water - next to Carlin
Springs. There's lots of water, if you will only dig

WELL, WELL, WELL.



I lay on my cot on the screend in
back porch with the crickets singing in
the hot summer night and felt the
somewhat cooler breeze coming from
the ravine. There was a whirr and the slow pulse
from twenty feet away from under the 4' X 4' by 4'
tin box. The well motor had turned on and was
semi quietly pumping water out of our sixty foot
deep well for some need in the house. I closed my
eyes and fell asleep to the cacophonous symphony
of a summer night.

Our community began as a dream of Samuel
S. Burdett and George Curtis in 1888. This was to
be a community for "all men and women of moder-
ate means who received stated salaries." The go-
ing price was \$100 for a 6,000 square foot lot (from
a total of 340 available lots). At that price the land
was not cheap (remember, in 1888 \$20 to \$50 A
MONTH was a good wage) but it wasn't out of
reach. This was to be one of the first "planned sub-
divisions in Arlington County" with a pavilion
(including a bar that could hold 250 patrons) a
dance area (which was used on Sundays for
church gatherings – the bar was closed) and a



Designation of old well at Carlin Hall provided by the county

for it. One of our neighbors says she doesn't have
to dig – she has a natural spring in her basement!
She DOESN'T feel this is an enhancement to her
property value, however.

Most of the old houses in Glencarlyn have
some sort of well located in or around them. The
house at 5500 South 5th St. had a shallow well that
is now dry in the basement. The house at 5527 3rd
St. South has a very good well. Our old house still
has its old well which will pump for a half hour be-
fore going dry for a good eight hours to refill.

A few years ago, during a very dry season,
the Glencarlyn Executive Committee tried to figure

a way to water the community garden at the library without having to pay for the water from the county. Betty Vertiz and her brother Sherwood Hedrick (who grew up here), told us there HAD been a well at Carlin Hall and approximately where it was. It was filled in the late '50's for safety reasons.

After talking to Luis Araya, a very knowledgeable county employee, we were given the specific location of the old well. The Citizen's Association's Executive Committee (Pete Oliver, Paul Nuhn, David Backus and Judy Funderburk) tried to find the old well. We traced the pipe from Carlin Hall to an area below the western sand box and probed and dug for several hours before we surmised the county had filled the well with dirt instead of just capping the well with cement.

Water (and sewer) are very important. Arlington County uses between 25 and 40 MILLION gallons of water A DAY! What's the reason for such a large variation in water usage? The 40 million gallons a day is recorded during the summer. The 15million gallon delta is probably for watering purposes. Arlington charges for sewage disposal for ALL water.

On the other side of the equation, before sewer lines there were outhouses or septic tanks. An outhouse, if you've never seen one, is a small building with a seat in it over a hole in the ground used for a toilet. Aside from the aroma, these early contrivances were cold in the winter, hot in the summer and never very convenient although they beat the previous alternative (mother nature's trees and bushes).

In 1881 the septic tank was patented and was starting to be used by 1883 in the US (it's a French invention). This was a much more efficient means of disposal and allowed for "indoor plumbing" and didn't have the olfactory downsides of an outhouse. Unfortunately it did and still does require some land for the "drainage field." This was very difficult with the 6,000 square foot lots in Glencarlyn.

In the early 1900's wells were THE source of water. One of the major problems with the out-

houses and the septic systems is the leeching from them to the water supply. That is one of the reasons for a shorter human life span in the early days. Water contamination could lead to some nasty, life threatening problems (remember, typhoid fever killed Tad and Willie, President Lincoln's two sons while Lincoln was in the Whitehouse). The drinking water contamination was a national problem, not just Glencarlyn's).

When sewers were finally installed in Glencarlyn (earliest record is 1934), the housing followed. That maybe one of the reasons there were so few houses before the 40's and 50's and most of those houses were located on more than one lot.

Today some of the old wells still exist although few folks know about them or, if they do, they ignore them. The water may or may not be potable. It is against county ordinance to hook the wells up to your indoor water – dangerous for drinking but also the county doesn't want you to use it for other purposes either. The county feels it would not be fair to use this water and run it into the sewer system "free" (your sewer system bill is tied directly to your water meter bill).

There is the other use for this water that IS useful and, as far as I can tell, still legal. Watering your grass, gardens and plants is a good use of this source of water. The water should be tested for safety, but for the plants' drinking water, this should be safe. That's why the Executive Committee spent a Saturday looking for the well.

In the mid fifties our aunts had the county water and sewer system put into their house at 5500 South Fifth Street. When the workers got done with the job on a hot summer day, my aunts asked them to cool down with some fresh county water. They had learned earlier that we still had well water at our house and they tramped over to have some "fresh Glencarlyn water" at our place instead.



VV 3/2010

David, Jimmy McGuire, Alan, Billy, Mother, and Marge Cleary



STORIES AND DREAMS

Adventure happens when you reach out and take the hand of chance.

A trip that is well planned and properly executed is a trip. A plan that is made in its principles and then you improvise as you go, that, my friend, is an adventure.

Who we are is formed in many ways. One principle way is through our family. Family stories that are passed down about what happened to our parents and grand-

parents (not to mention cousins) give us a sense of who we are.

I grew up in the house that my Grandfather and Grandmother had put together from two summer cottages in the woods just beyond the original design of Glencarlyn. Their dream was a house to raise a family. They worked from around 1920 to the completion in 1926 to make two small cottages into a bigger house (around 1,400 square feet). To do this, they joined the two houses with a stairwell and hallway between the cottages, raised the rear roof of one cottage and dug a cellar, then installed the only bathroom upstairs in the hall between the two houses.

This was a lot of work and the entire family helped. My Dad, Uncle David, and

Aunt Peggy under the direction of my Grandparents were the workers. Soon thereafter my Granddad died. My Grandmother carried on. She raised the family by working as a high school teacher in Washington DC, catching the trolley in Glencarlyn to work at Northwestern High School in DC.



Grandmother Backus—VERY strong willed woman

She gave our family many stories and examples from her life. One of those stories was her dream to show her children what a wonderful country we live in. One summer she packed the family into a model “T” Ford, with camping gear and drove to the west coast seeing the country and the National Parks. This was before there were in-



Model “T.” A similar car used for traveling the country by Grandmother Backus and my dad and aunt and uncle.

terstates. The “T” had maybe 40 horsepower, the roads and country were new and old and our nation stretched before them. This was my Grandmother’s dream gift adventure to her family and generations to come.

She knew where she wanted to go; she wanted her children to see this magnificent nation and love it as she did. With a “T” you saw each mile of our nation at a maximum speed of 50mph (that was downhill—most of the time it was 25 to 30mph).

Family stories are one of the most precious gifts we give our children. Stories tell our children (and ourselves) where we came from, what we hold dear and what we hope for. As the old song from South Pacific goes, “You’ve got to have a dream to have a dream come true.”

My Grandmother’s dream became my Mother’s dream. If Grandmother Backus could go across country in a model “T” with her children, then my mother could do it too! The 1962 World’s Fair in Seattle, Washington, gave us the perfect reason and destination. What an adventure it was!

Our family needed a second car to haul our puppet business (see **I remember: The Puppet lady** page 25). We bought a 1958 orange and black (Halloween colored) VW Microbus. We got it in 1960. This spiffy four speed miracle of modern transportation came standard with a four cylinder air cooled 36 horsepower motor and a heater that could keep you warm on most VERY HOT summer days.

We loaded the car up with Alan, me, Mom, Jimmy (a neighbor) and Karen, a cousin, and camping gear. We traded cousins on the west coast, Marge for Karen. Our Dad joined us there as well and we went to

see the World's Fair in Seattle, Washington on the return trip.

We weighed at a weigh station as we left Virginia and found we were 150 lbs over what VW recommended as the maximum capacity for the car. None of us wanted to get out so we ignored the extra weight.

We tried driving at 70 mph. That was only with a good tail wind going down hill. We burned out a cylinder in Ohio and were told to keep the speed around 55mph. That still beat Model "T" speeds, by at least 20mph!

We camped in state and national camp grounds or stayed with old neighbors and friends from one side of this glorious country to the other. We crawled up the Rocky Mountains at ten miles per hour. We camped at Zion, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Kings Canyon, Sequoia, Bad Lands, Lake Tahoe, Craters of the Moon, Grand Canyon, Mount Tamalpios and a myriad of other state and national campgrounds. We saw the World's Fair with all its prognostications of what to expect of science and consumer goods, not to mention the "space needle" and rides and wonderful people. WOW!

We took a back road into the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Mom said looked good on the map. It turned out to be a one and a half lane wide dirt and gravel road (with two way traffic) with a sheer 1500 foot drop on one side and a mountain wall on the other. No guard rails. Silence reigned in the car. We prayed and said bad things under our breath about maps all the way. When we got to the Garden of the Gods, it was glorious. Our relief at getting there may have influenced how wonderful we thought the park was.

We laughed at prairie dogs, were im-

pressed by buffalo, absolutely awe struck at the Grand Canyon, and were bored by the endless plains of Kansas, and the mid west. The vastness of our country begins to sink in when you've traveled all day on a seemingly endless ribbon of road between miles and miles of waving grain to end the day in what looks like the same level open plains where you started. It was hard to believe how this must have felt with a covered wagon with a maximum of 10 miles A DAY!

We fought, laughed, worked and grew closer together over the ten thousand miles we slowly drove over that summer.

We would chase thunderstorms in the distance on the great plains until one day we caught one. The wind literally picked up the overweight VW and put us back down facing into the wind on a bare road in the middle of Kansas. It turned out to be a ferocious storm. No shelter anywhere for miles so we rocked in the wind and sang songs until the storm passed.

We developed a saying as the trip progressed. When it rained (and it did) and we were all miserable, or the heat was 115 in the shade crossing the plains of the Dakotas in a car which defined "air conditioning" as having all the windows open, it was "Quityerbitchin and have fun!" And we did!

When Mother got back she wrote it up, demonstrated with numbers that it cost less to travel as we did than it would to stay at home and got published in "Parade" in the Washington Post Sunday section .

When we returned, just like Dad and Uncle David and Aunt Peggy must have felt, Glencarlyn was still the center of our universe. It seemed smaller but it was now in the context of the greatest country in the world, a gateway and launching pad for us.



ian park in D.C. and we ARE on the southern side. What this means for us, weather - wise, is we are not afflicted with the treacherous ice storms of southern Virginia down to below Georgia (most of the time), and we don't get the soft feathery snow storms depicted in the Robert Frost' poems so prevalent in the north, for the most part.

We get snow some years, but THAT snow

Dangerous weapon, ready for launch!

VV 2/2009



SNOW

Robert Frost's poem about stopping to watch the snow fall and then ending with "Miles to go before I sleep, Miles to go before I sleep" has so many philosophical as well as evocative overtones to it. The longer I live, the more the poem resonates.

HOWEVER, snow to us was always magic. It was a day off of school. It was a chance to sled in the park. Snow allowed the artists in our community to create wonderful pieces of art or just pile the snow up into fantastic mounds or forts.

We aren't "northern" or truly "southern." The Mason Dixon line runs through Merid-

can be VERY disruptive to our civilized way of life. Above all the other attributes (and detriments) of snow, in this area, snow is the ultimate universal ammunition for frequent and intense snow ball fights. Or it used to be.

TV and all the other means of entertainment of today were not available to us in the early 50's. Video games? Not a chance. Monopoly, hearts, canasta, Parcheesi or read a good book, those were the racy forms of fun we had. But we had a park to run in (leave in the morning, come in for lunch, and run ourselves ragged for the rest of the day), bikes to ride and things to do.

In the winter, the snow provided hours of fun. Rolling huge snow balls in the front lawn was fun. The bigger the better. The snow was perfect for packing into balls that we would roll around until we couldn't budge them another inch. That was great fun. We could never get them piled on top

of another one when they go so big – too heavy. But if you rolled a couple of these big balls together, viola! You had a fort. Or a wall or you could build (by packing snow on top of the ball) a body for a snowman. Dad thought it was very creative until he realized, when the balls got too big, they started to rip the grass out of the yard.

A two to four inch wet snow would cover everything and then we could have snowball fights all that day. The snow would then freeze overnight and would be useless until late the next afternoon.

A normal invitation to this time honored sport consisted of either a snowball whizzing by your head or the “thump” of the snowball against your jacket. After that it was a pitched battle. We didn’t have any plans to over run our antagonist. The idea was to hit them as many times as possible while maintaining your distance and not getting hit yourself. This meant you not only had to be good at hitting what you aimed at but also very quick to dodge the “incoming” snowballs.

Due to limitations in how many snowballs you could hold and still be accurate throwing them, it was a dance of “make, throw and dodge.” Even a semi-deflected hit on the arm was a hit. If you were cool, you could ‘catch’ an incoming snowball; that was the epitome of flaunting your advisory’s abilities.

The battles would be between two kids and sometimes mushroom to many others who just wanted to join the fun. The battles would last until one side got too tired or too cold (making snowballs gets to your hands

after awhile).

The biggest snowball fight we had in Glencarlyn took place in February 1959. Fourth Street between Jefferson and Illinois Street from about 3pm until 4pm, parents and kids of all ages took part in a great snow relocating operation that left everyone super tired and with sore arms for a week. There was no special reason it happened and there were no casualties – just everyone out enjoying the forty five degree weather and the last of our six inch snow.

STORES OF GLEN-CARLYN

Today we have one “convenience store” (the Seven Eleven) located at 23 South Carlin Springs Road, just south of the intersection of Route 50 and Carlin Springs Road. It wasn’t always this way.

Today we can bypass this local store (with its minimum supplies) and go to many other stores relatively close by with huge inventories. In the 40’s and 50’s, we didn’t have such choices. The closest shopping center was located at Arlington Forest at the A&P located on the east end of the Arlington Forest Shopping center—our MALL of that time period.

This wasn’t really available until Arlington Forest was completed in the 40’s. In this shopping center we also had a Drug Fair with a soda fountain and many wonderful gadgets and needed things available as well as a hardware store.

But if It snowed, we couldn’t easily walk to these stores and get the necessary milk, bread and supplies needed. This has been, and continues to be, one reason we are fortunate to have the store we have.

In 1912 we had our first little store founded on 4th and Carlin Springs Rd. by Mr. Besley,

known to his neighbors as “Pap.” He was a good man who loved what he did and extended generous credit to his clients. He sold penny candy, bulk cookies and crackers, kerosene and other supplies. The store was heated by a pot bellied stove and he kept the Bible open on the sideboard. It was a meeting place for the neighbors as well as a



Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Shepherd in front of their store in 1949.



The Besley store on Route 50 North was operational from 1921 to 1952.

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Shepherd in front of store in 1949 The Besley store open from 1912 to 1952

VV 2/2008



grocery store. He stayed in business until 1952 (I remember going in and buying candy from him. I was a penny short and he even extended credit to me!)

of our neighborhood again.

Another small store was built at 23 South Carlin Springs Road by Fred Claeys. He built this store sometime between 1918 and 1920. This store was then owned and operated by John Myers. It was later sold to Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Shepherd. It was later rented to Mr. Clarence MacDonald who operated it for a time and finally to Mr. Robert Hamilton.

The Glencarlyn post office was run out of this store until the Postal Service closed it. This was a change from our earlier post office which was run out of the kitchen window of the Hilder house located at 5501 South Third Street in the 1920's.

In the late 50's, with the conversion of the Glencarlyn Elementary School to Kenmore Jr. High School, there were complaints that Mr. Hamilton was not being strict about selling magazines (Playboy) and beer to patrons over 18. This was before there were laws pertaining to the sales of such magazines to minors and this got many of the residents upset. When the sale of the store to Seven Eleven came up for review, the Glencarlyn Citizen's Association voted to have the commercial zoning revoked. The president of the Association, Arnold A. Carlson, felt so strongly about having the store for our convenience in the neighborhood (particularly since it would be run by the new franchise, Seven Eleven) he resigned his post as president of the GCA and went to bat for the franchise. With Mr. Carlson's help, the franchise won, and we still have a convenience store in our neighborhood.

Times have changed. We now have many alternatives close by for our shopping needs. With the rising cost of gas and an emphasis on not taking unnecessary trips, it's nice to know there is a nearby alternative. Also, on a snowy morning, with more snow on it's way, it has been a comfort to know that there is still a place, within walking distance, to get the basic supplies until we can get out



VV 4/2009

newspaper and your imagination and you could rule the skies.

We had a wonderful open field at the original Glencarlyn Elementary School (now, more or less between Kenmore Intermediate and the New Carlin Springs Elementary School). In the 50's we would put our talents together and build some wonderful contraptions - some of them even flew. Our kites were only kept in bounds by the size of the balsa wood we could buy, the strength of the string to keep control of them and our imagination. In March, there would be one Saturday for a kite flying contest. If it rained, we put it off for a weekend.

You could win for having the most exotic contraption *that flew* (*this knooled out a few dousies*), the most unique thing *that flew*, the most decorative – but the real winner was the highest flying kite.

How do you determine how high a kite flies? Geometry? Special instruments? Nah! We used a simpler method. The rules were sort of sketchy (it's been awhile) but it had something to do with how many balls of string you could get up in the air pulled by the kite. There IS a physics lesson here somewhere, I'm sure. The weight and strength of the string, the freshness of the breeze, the size and efficiency of the kite - it all had a limiting factor on the final limits of altitude and how much string it could pull into the heavens.

KITES AND OTHER THINGS THAT FLY



We had fun with minimal costs. It was helpful to have hobby shops and a good imagination.

A hobby shop? Hmmmm. Long time no see. At a good hobby shop, you could buy the makings of a model airplane, the kit for a "ship in a bottle," the paint for small replicas of what ever you built and the basics for building kites. Balsa wood sticks were the only exotic material really needed. That and some white paste, some kite string, a few pages of the Washington Post or Evening Star

One year Dad helped me put together a huge kite. We tied the cross members of balsa wood together with the kite string and white pasted a couple of double sheets of the Washington Post together. It was twice the size of any kite we had ever created before (about 4 feet or so from the base to the top and two thirds that for the width). We had the biggest, meanest winningest kite ever made for the March contest. To finish off this wondrous monstrosity, I water painted it with a thunderbird – a marvelous extravagant figment of my imagination, The World Book Encyclopedia, and a truly poor artistic execution and all this overlaid on the newsprint of the day! This multi-colored behemoth was a sight to behold! We were PROUD!

On the day of the contest, we arrived at the Glencarlyn Elementary all ready to win. Everyone was impressed with the size of our project. Dad held it up into the freshening wind and unleashed it and it soared into the heavens. We raced through the first ball of string and knotted the second ball to the end of the first. The second ball spun in my hand and played out. We were outdistancing all the other contestants. The thrill of a well earned victory made us swell with pride as we watched our glorious creation become a small speck in the sky. We had achieved a new altitude. As the third ball of string was fastened onto the end of the second ball, the breeze freshened and my kite reached a new zenith. We were really winning! Then the kite pulled extra hard and snapped the kite string and our winning kite, with it's glorious painted thunderbird and two balls plus of string headed for DC, trailing the broken kite string higher and higher into the heavens.

Another, less sanctioned form of flying was the hot air balloon. On this project, our folks had no knowledge (we hoped). This form of late night entertainment relied on an old plastic dry cleaning bag, a few soda straws and several birthday candles. On a cool wet summer evening, Eric, Alan and I would go to a clearing, hold the bag open above the attached soda straw and candle cradle, light the candles and wait for the hot air to make our invention rise.

Since we picked very calm wet cool summer evenings, the bag would slowly ascend into the evening sky and float quietly to the east. The Sun Newspaper had a few "sightings" of UFO's the following day. We wondered (after we had launched several of these) what happened to the balloons. So one VERY calm evening, in the name of safe science, we launched one. The bag went up and we could follow it's total "life span." It rose up to sixty or seventy feet and hovered there until the candles burnt out. The balloon just gently wobbled it's bright candles above us until the light spot in the evening sky dimmed, then flickered for a few moments and disappeared. No fire problems and we figured the bag floated safely to the ground.

We were thus emboldened and became more adventurous. We got two bags and taped them together which gave us more hot air and it achieved a higher altitude. Then we decided to try a little aluminum foil attached to the bottom of the balloon. This time the long, high plastic bag inflated and rose with the aluminum strip attached to an altitude of about a hundred feet and floated east. The folks at National Airport were NOT AMUSED. We read in the Sun Newspaper the next day an airplane had to be re-routed to avoid a collision with an "unknown object in the flight path". That ended our experimenting with hot air balloons.

Since then, kites seem to all come in a kit. They have "real thunderbirds" painted on them (or whatever else you might desire). The Smithsonian has a kite flying day down at the Washington Monument once a year, but our early custom of a community contest went the way of the hobby shop. As for hot air balloons; our folks never did figure that one out (thank goodness). Besides, if we tried it today, we probably would end up having a long, sincere, in depth conversation with Homeland Security.



LOVER'S LANE



VV 9/2009

Many a tryst was born of decisions made in the 50's by the Arlington County Park Au-

thority.

Prior to the late 50's, if you and that "special someone" wanted a little time alone, you got on your waffle stompers (always an alluring attire for a good time) and headed down into the park. Finding a secluded spot wasn't difficult due to the lack of other people in the park. For those desiring a

more private venue, there were rumors of a tent or two being pitched there as well.

Of course the 50's were a time of mechanized romance. This meant the refinement of love in a car. In that case you had a couple of alternatives in Glencarlyn. One was the parking lot at the end of 4th street (a perennial favorite) and the other was the road that came off Carlyn Springs road and wound around to Mr. Schulez's half finished

house in the woods (please see page 41, **The Houses in the woods**) and the Myer's house on the other side of the brook. This road has been extended and is now part of the road that leads to the Long Branch Nature Center.

The police would interrupt couples in the parking lot on 4th Street, but it was much better than being caught on the road into Mr. Schulez's house by Mr. Schulez. He was a stern fellow who didn't appreciate young love. Nobody went there a second time after he caught them.

In the late 50's the Park Authority decided that the park would have a much greater "utilization factor" if there were a series of roads put in. We ended up with a nice "pie crust" (as they call them in Alabama) road put in. No curbs! And this led to the opening up of the park to soooooo many new folks using the park. It also led to the winter sledding slopes.

These roads doubled the number of neighbors willing to come to Glencarlyn day in the park. Fact is, there was no Glencarlyn day in the park before the roads (and pavilions etc. were added). After the roads were put in, on weekends, the park was filled

with all sorts of folks who loved the four wheeled convenience of the park. But there were other unintended consequences.

The roads through the park are the same today. However, then, there were no impediments to going through the park from 4th street through to the north end of Jefferson Street (now closed), or going over to the Greenbrier apartment complex on the other side of the park.

One evening in the middle of the summer at around 2am we were treated to the racing sounds of a car setting a new speed record on these park roads. The next day we learned a Porche had raced on the roads for a half hour, each time a little faster. We knew because a police officer was summoned and he saw the Porche, and the Porche saw him. The Porche beat the policeman through the park and got away.

The favorite place for “true luv” was the road that runs behind the houses on 3rd St. Another place was the ford across the stream at the bottom of the 4th St. hill. Of course, the parking lot at the top of the park on 4th St. was and still is an amorous destination for many.

Being young and mischievous, Eric, Alan and I had some fun growing up playing tricks on the otherwise engrossed couples. One of our favorite tricks was tossing firecrackers at the parked cars from a safe distance in the woods. Usually two crackers were enough to ruin someone’s erotic adventures.

One night a car was parked in the fourth street parking lot. We could tell they were drinking because every few minutes another beer bottle would sail out of the car window. We tossed a firecracker and they tossed a beer bottle. The bottle hit and the firecracker went off. The door opened. A boozy fellow got out and staggered over to the bottles on the ground, picked up one, looked at it, and dropped it, shielding his face from the explosion he was sure would happen. He did this three times before quitting. We laughed so hard we couldn’t throw the second firecracker.

We stopped doing this when, one evening we were down in the woods above the ford at the bottom of the 4th street entrance and tossed a firecracker at a car. The fellow got out of the care and calmly advised the surrounding woods that he was not amused and for us (wherever we were) to leave him alone, he was busy. He seemed very polite but firm. He got back into the back seat of the car and ... well. We laughed, waited a few minutes and tossed another cracker. He got out, informed us we had been warned, and started blasting away into our part of the woods with what sounded like a 45. We ate dirt trying to get as low as possible, and when he had emptied the gun, we departed, never trying that stunt again.

Later, in high school, there was something called “safety sticker lover.” The safety stickers for the cars used water based adhesive to stick to the windshields. The idea was to make out in the front of the car until the safety sticker would start to slide down the windshield.

In the mid 70’s, gates were installed at all the entrances to the park and road impediments placed on the interlocking roads to stop through traffic. It was back to waffle stompers. Nobody wanted to WALK down into the park at night for fun so many of the “personal parties” and “making whoopee” ceased in our park.

Sometime in the 90’s the gates were taken out (too much trouble to open and close them) although the road blocking devices are still in place. We have many folks from all over the area that come to enjoy our park – and I guess some of them still try to do so in the very late evening.



George Washington Parke Custis built a gristmill on Four Mile Run on Columbia Pike in 1836. In 1880, Dr. John Parsonn of New Jersey purchased the mill, rebuilding and renaming it Arlington Mill. Eventually, both the mill and the surrounding section of the county took the name Reston. (AHS.)



We were working on the stream clean up in March when I noticed a cement wall across the stream about one hundred feet upstream from the bike / railroad bridge in park at the end of 3rd St. (the park pavilion where Glencarlyn day pancake breakfast is held).

This was new to me since, when I grew up, the stream took the long way around this area instead of the cut through that it now uses. How did a cement wall end up across the stream? Who would put such a thing in and to what purpose? I knew it had to be very old because it was only unearthed in the last few years when the stream cut a new channel and the cement has all the quality of very old workmanship.

Before there was electricity, we used water and wind power (Holland) to grind wheat and corn into flour or corn meal. The use of gristmills goes back before Roman times. We use a similar process for milling today but use other means of power to drive flat steel wheels instead of stones to do the grinding.

These early gristmills would, for a price (usually a portion of the grain – called “the miller’s toll”), take the grain and put it through a grinding operation, which consisted of two circular mill stones set very close to each other. These water driven stones, slowly rotating, crushed the grain between them. The flour and corn meal produced were course by today’s standards, but, on the other hand, there was a great deal more fiber in it.



The old mill dam south of Willow Point

MILLS

This cement wall in the stream turns out

to be the last remnants of John Ball's Mill (built opposite the mouth of Lubber Run Stream which enters a short distance upstream of this wall). When John Ball died in 1766, he mentions his mill and, according to [Arlington Heritage](#), the millstone on the property of John Ball's house is one of the last remaining indications of the mill (the Ball – Seller's house). With this year's stream clean up campaign, initiated by Pete Oliveri (GCA president) and coordinated with the county ranger, Benjamin Williams, the other 'last indication of the old gristmill' has been discovered.

There were other mills in the area that took advantage of the water power of our streams. Another mill my mother used to tell us about was "the old mill dam" located seventy five feet below the bike path crossing at the Barcroft apartments. At this point in the stream, there is a natural drop off over rocks that have holes bored into them (from the old mill?). On the far side of this drop off is a natural deep pool of water that we would sometimes swim in during the summer. My mother told us the old mill stone we have in our front yard was originally from this mill. The mill stone and its' story, were left to us by my great aunts.

The last gristmill (pictured above) was the one at Columbia Pike and Four Mile Run. This gristmill was built in 1836 on land bequeathed to George Washington Parke Custis by THE George Washington. The mill was subsequently passed on to Mr. Custis' grandson, Custis Lee. This mill also didn't make it to the twentieth century but was destroyed during the Civil War.

What about George Washington? Did he have a gristmill? Funny you should ask. There is an operating gristmill located three miles away from Mount Vernon (5513 Mt. Vernon Hwy. 703-780-3383, http://www.mountvernon.org/learn/explore_mv/

[index.cfm/ss/32/](#)). This is THE George Washington's gristmill and distillery. Yes, he made whisky, which was sold (as was his flour and corn meal) up and down the east coast. This is run by the Mt. Vernon Ladies Association, and they do RUN the mill every day of the week April through October. You can buy flour there and ... oh yes ... you can make arrangements to get some of the whisky there too. They sell combination tickets to the gristmill and Mt. Vernon estate at Mt. Vernon. Call before you go but it's worth the short trip.

We do live in an historic area that has been touched by our great leaders and founders (George Washington's survey marker across from the dog park, still there after all these years and the preserved "mark" on the segment of the original tree he marked in the entrance of Glencarlyn library). There are many innovations that have since almost disappeared (like the mills) not to mention the Civil War (or 'the War Between the States'). When planting a bush in our front yard, I dug up an old '56 caliber civil war bullet. This slug is HUGE. If you were hit with that slug ANYWHERE, you were in serious trouble!

The cement wall in the stream is another reminder that we live in the present in the midst of an historically rich past.



A true entrepreneur at work!

VV 5/2013

cided to go seek our fame and fortune in the job market – he for the summer, me for more career oriented horizons.

We took Horace Greeley's advice and headed west. A road trip was no big deal – we had done THAT when we were barely teens when wanderlust and a family tradition led us on a

two month odyssey across this fabulous country in a Microbus in the early sixties – twice.

For transportation this time, we were chosen by a colleague from my college job as a DC tour guide to drive her one year old Fiat 850 Spyder to her soon to be new home on the west coast. She wanted to fly and we wanted to feel the open road stretching before us.

Fiat was never known as the most dependable car but the cute white convertible Spyder, we hoped, would be an exception. For us it was a fun little car that got us there in low slung fun style with little gas usage. The "850" in the name signified the displacement of the hearty little engine in the back – many motorcycles sport more displacement than this baby.

As we raced across country (sometimes up to 70mph) in our spiffy transportation we would occasionally see little slips of pink and white paper flutter from somewhere in the depths of the car and flash up into the passenger area and then whip out of the car in the fresh breeze. Many of these bazaar occurrences happened before

SUMMER JOBS



Everyone has their most memorable summer job. Life guarding at swimming pools, retail sales, waitress, internships, office work, bricklayers or roofer's apprentice, mechanic's helper come to mind as a few of the assorted ways to make some money in the summer.

School was over (I just graduated with my BS) and it was time to find greener pastures. The world was my oyster and even though the job market was not as fruitful as we wanted it to be, Alan (my brother – not yet graduated) and I de-

School was over (I just graduated with my BS) and it was time to find greener pastures. The world was my oyster and even though the job market was not as fruitful as we wanted it to be, Alan (my brother – not yet graduated) and I de-

we caught one of these missives and found the date, time and infraction printed clearly on them. Seems Jackie, the owner, had been collecting traffic tickets in DC for quite a while and we were in the process of papering the roads across country with these forgotten or ignored communications from the police.

When we learned about the tickets, we called Jackie in the evening (cheaper phone rates) and told her of our find. She laughed a little nervously and said it was a good thing we left when we did. The folks from DC had come to her house the day after we left with a note from someone and a tow truck. We asked if we were in any danger from the authorities. She said “absolutely no trouble as long as you keep going west!” This was not the reassuring answer we were hoping for.

Having no real alternative in mind, we started the little “850” and kept going west (with, perhaps, a little more gusto).

It was a fun trip with few unfortunate memories unless you include the time Alan wanted to pass someone at high speed and asked for my opinion of a car many lengths behind us. It seemed innocuous enough to me and I gave him the thumbs up. Ops. Plain clothes police car. The problem was exacerbated when the officer from the God fearing western megalopolis (population 500) found out we didn’t have a “letter of permission to drive across the country” (or anywhere else, for that matter). He hauled us down to the local courthouse where we made some calls and Jackie got a letter faxed that exonerated us for thievery from the long arm of the law. Thank goodness they didn’t check on delinquent tickets in other jurisdictions.

We had landed in a cash and carry state – you paid them cash and you carried on with your business, which we did with reluctance for the cash and relish for carrying on!

Once we landed in LA and gave up the cute little car to Jackie, we got other transportation

and started looking for jobs.

We tried many and any means of earning a living. I ended up working at the Beverly Hilton For four hours. At six four, they felt my presence as a waiter was too imposing and let me go. Oh well. Sometimes you win, sometimes you learn.

After many attempts we ended up at Mel’s Merry Melody Ice Cream firm. This epitome of epicurean entrepreneurship was located in Culver City and consisted of a dusty fenced parking lot with about 200 very old, dilapidated ice cream trucks of varying ancestry and mechanical decay. Alan and I interviewed for the precious jobs available (seems old Mel had a bit of a turnover problem) and I was hired on the spot. Mel felt Alan was not of the proper caliber to represent his superior wares to the general public and, perhaps, felt Alan would be hard on his trucks which couldn’t take much more punishment.

Mel felt everyone should be given the opportunity to excel in his or her own way. The harder you worked the more money you could make! Yeah, it was commission work. You were assigned an area and you could strike up the band and troll for little kids with pocket money. If you’ve never been in a business that has a repetitive music theme or some sound that goes on and On and ON and ON, you’re lucky. I certainly pity the workers at Disneyland “It’s a small world.” Alan and I can hear three bars of the Merry Melody Ice Cream Jingle and be taken back to those heady-days of driving the dusty long dry streets in Los Angeles in search of the next kid who could afford an ice cream bar.

Yes, Alan decided, since we had applied together, we might as well stay together. Mel had no problem with this. He wasn’t going to pay us any more than we earned so Alan was my “Shotgun” man.

Turned out that wasn’t a bad label for Alan. When we were introduced to our trusty truck, we

marveled at many features. One was that it still ran. If there were “service lives” on vehicles, this one was the feline of the bunch – had nine lives and was working hard on number eight when we were introduced. On second thought, maybe number nine.

Another feature was the large prominent padlock on the back of the truck protecting the frozen confections inside. We asked, naively, “why is such a large lock on such a small truck? Doesn’t this interfere with the access to the contents?” Mel answered “Yes” and introduced us to our “route.” We had the Watts district as our potential sales gold mine. In that area the children had developed a game called “empty the truck.” This was played by two or three kids. One would jump on the back bumper of the cruising truck, open the door to the freezer and unload the frozen cargo to his buddies. Since Alan and I depended on a 50% split of all sold goods, and since Mel did NOT discount for inventory unaccounted for (stolen or eaten by the drivers), the lock stayed!

Alan and I arrived at the appointed hour (7am) to pick up our fully stocked ice cream truck. We were on time because we had been brought up to be prompt. Also, Mel told us he closed the gate at 8am sharp and you were either on your way or not going that day. Miss two days and the next budding entrepreneur got your gig.

We fired up the old beast and headed for the open gates of opportunity followed by the stream of other motley machines in a blue haze of exhaust smoke and dust to spread the sounds of “Merry Melody” and Mel’s goods across a waiting hot city.

I was in the driver’s seat (lumpy with one exposed spring strategically placed to keep the driver alert!) and headed down the street. It became apparent that anything over 25mph was going to be impossible for several reasons. One had to do with the expiring engine under the hood. It was doing its best to hit 25. Higher

speeds could jeopardize the entire mechanical balance. Besides this impediment to high speed adventure, the steering had some definite failings. You could roll the wheel 90 degrees from one side to the other before it had an effect on the direction the ice cream truck was going. A pot hole on either side of the road could lead to disastrous directional difficulties. For both of these very legitimate reasons, we gave up on LA’s famous freeways.

After an hour of wandering the surface streets to our route, both Alan and I had a jaundiced opinion of this golden opportunity in the city of the Angels. We were not dissuaded from our appointed rounds, just somewhat disheartened by the conveyance.

We hit the first block and fired up the jaunty little “Merry Melody” ditty through the speakers. This was a signal to all and sundry to come and buy. Should I ever live long enough to forget that tune it will be blessing.

We trolled the streets for hours. We sold some ice cream (not much) and dickered with kids who weren’t willing to pay the full price for the products. Alan and I DON’T dicker over the price of ice cream bars. The lock on the back seemed a better and better idea as the day edged into evening.

We wheezed our way back to the lot and got in line against the outside street curb fifteen minutes before Mel opened the gates at 5pm. We were not the first back in the line.

The first day our inventory and money matched and we took home maybe twenty five bucks. Not much for a full day of fun in Watts.

We brainstormed and connived to think of ways to enhance the balance sheet. Watts didn’t seem a very affluent area for us to make the big strike in ice cream sales.

The week dragged on. Neither of us were feeling the zest of fulfillment or growth in our po-

sitions of purveyors of iced confections. Besides that, the steering had not improved and the truck's get up and go had definitely got up and went long ago.

On Friday Alan and I had come to the conclusion that this was not the most propitious way to spend our summer – the proceeds were barely covering our expenses.

That was our day to begin getting truly disillusioned with the whole affair. I guess you could say we demonstrated this failing morale by calling the CHIPS for an inspection of our vehicle. California does not do periodic inspection of cars but does the “on the spot” inspection with large fines for being out of compliance. We used a paid phone in Watts and called in this mangy excuse for transportation to be inspected. We waited a half hour (without the Merry Melody jingle playing) for the arrival of the constables. Nothing! I guess the police felt a trip to Watts to bust a failing ice cream truck was not worth the effort.

We wheezed our way back to the lot and waited to be admitted. Alan and I had decided to begin a further search for employment elsewhere and also decided the Merry Melody episode would NOT figure prominently in any future resume enhancements.

We went in to see Mel to announce our decision. He admitted us into the “bull pen” and we sat down and let him know of our decision. He didn't seem overly upset nor surprised by our announcement. I have a feeling we weren't the first to sever ties with his organization.

As Alan and I were about to leave, I started to ask Mel a question that had arisen in our travels through the exotic streets of Watts. As soon as I started the question Alan started to laugh. He knew where I was going.

Alan's laugh was infectious. With both of us laughing so hard it brought tears to our eyes and a truly perplexed Mel looking on, we finally got the question out. “What's the record for someone

getting out of state with a Merry Melody Ice Cream Truck?” We had to repeat the question at least once.

Mel, when he finally got the gist of the question, got a disgusted look on his face, said something to the effect he should have “never hired you two clowns to begin with!” and headed for the door.

Alan and I just kept on laughing so hard it almost hurt. Then Mel turned at the door, looked at us with a sour look and said, “Colorado Springs.” To this day, I believe I detected a certain level of pride in that answer.

After driving that truck for 50 miles a day at no faster than 25 mph, trying desperately to keep it between the sidewalks and wonder if someone in the back had figured out how to pick the padlock, I still marvel at that fellow (or gal) who made it from Culver City California to Colorado Springs, Colorado!

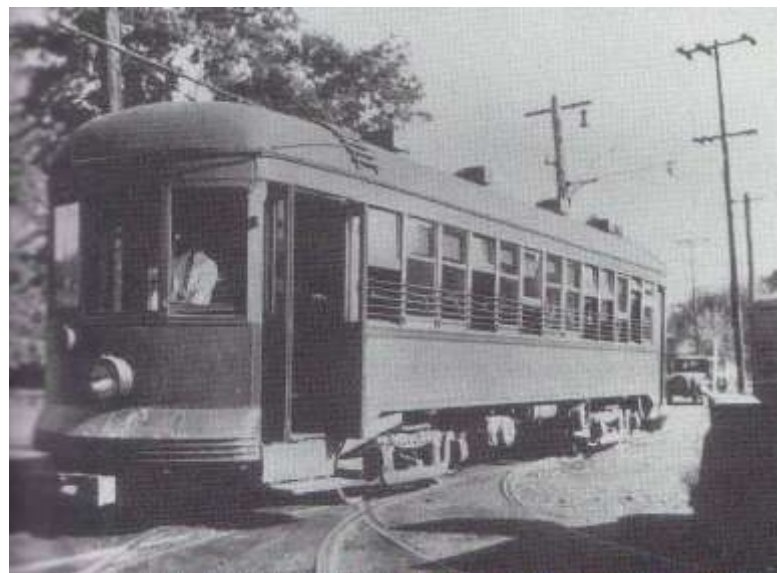


Washington & Old Dominion 57 at Bluemont Jct, VA, 12 Sept 1956

Don Ross Collection



Rail car at Bluemont Junction



Trolley to DC on W&OD rail line



TRAINS

In my youth we had a marvelous machine that would transform a penny from a circular piece of art into an oblong sixteenth of an inch thick, one and a half inch long copper wafer in less than a second! It was called a "train." Just place the penny on the track before the train came and right afterwards the magic was

done.

The W&OD line ran from Alexandria to Purcellville, VA. It was originally started in 1850 to run goods to the Appalachians and to get coal from that western area to the port of Alexandria. The businessmen who started it ran out of money and the rail line ended up providing passenger service thrice daily from Purcellville to Alexandria. This

train got nicknamed the “Virginia Creeper” because of its low speeds. Passenger service was slowly take over by auto use in 1951 and the rail line then became a freight only rail line until 1968 when it ceased operations.

My Grandmother Backus used to take the train into DC (transferring in Alexandria to a trolley pictured above) to teach school in the 40’s. She boarded the train at the end of Jefferson St. at the Glencarlyn station. The Glencarlyn station is long gone but there are still old rail stations commemorating the line located in Reston / Sunset Hill, Herndon, Hamilton, Purcellville and Round Hill. In Arlington, at the Bluemont Junction Park (across the stream from the tennis courts) is a caboose, set up by the Northern Virginia Park Authority (NVPA) in commemoration of the W&OD line. The caboose is open on the weekends during the summer. Check the NVPA for times.

The rail right of way was purchased by the NVPA in pieces over several years until it now spans a paved bike path over 44.8 miles long from Shirlington to Purcellville. Concluded in 1988 the trail is still owned and operated by the NVPA with the assistance of Friends of the Old Dominion Trail. This is a fun bike path trail because it crosses several roads but doesn’t seem to parallel many roads. This means it’s more secluded and bucolic than the bike path from DC to Alexandria and Mount Vernon or the gravel paved bike path next to the C&O Canal in DC / Maryland. Also because it’s paved, it certainly is more comfortable than the ride up the C&O canal tow path. If you like to bike ride, and want a day trip, it’s fun and easy. The best way is to start in Shirlington or Glencarlyn and ride UP toward Purcellville, and then back DOWN on the way home. Your legs will appreciate the down slope on the way back.

Aside from the irreversible transformative powers the train had over small coins (or anything else that got in their way), the rails provided a wonderful place to walk. I never knew anyone to “hitchhike” on the trains, but it could have happened considering the speeds the trains traveled.

The silvered steel rails are set 4’8.5” apart, which, by the way was determined way back when by the British who preceded us in rail development. The Romans had used this same gauge for roads. That width was determined by the average width of two horses’ derrieres side by side when they used to pull carts.

The northern states adopted this uniform gauge of track and the southern states didn’t. This led, in some historian’s mind, to one other reason the south lost the Civil War; their inability to easily transport goods and personnel through their territories.

The steel rails are held in place by “sleepers” or rail ties made of creosote soaked wood set at 2’ intervals.

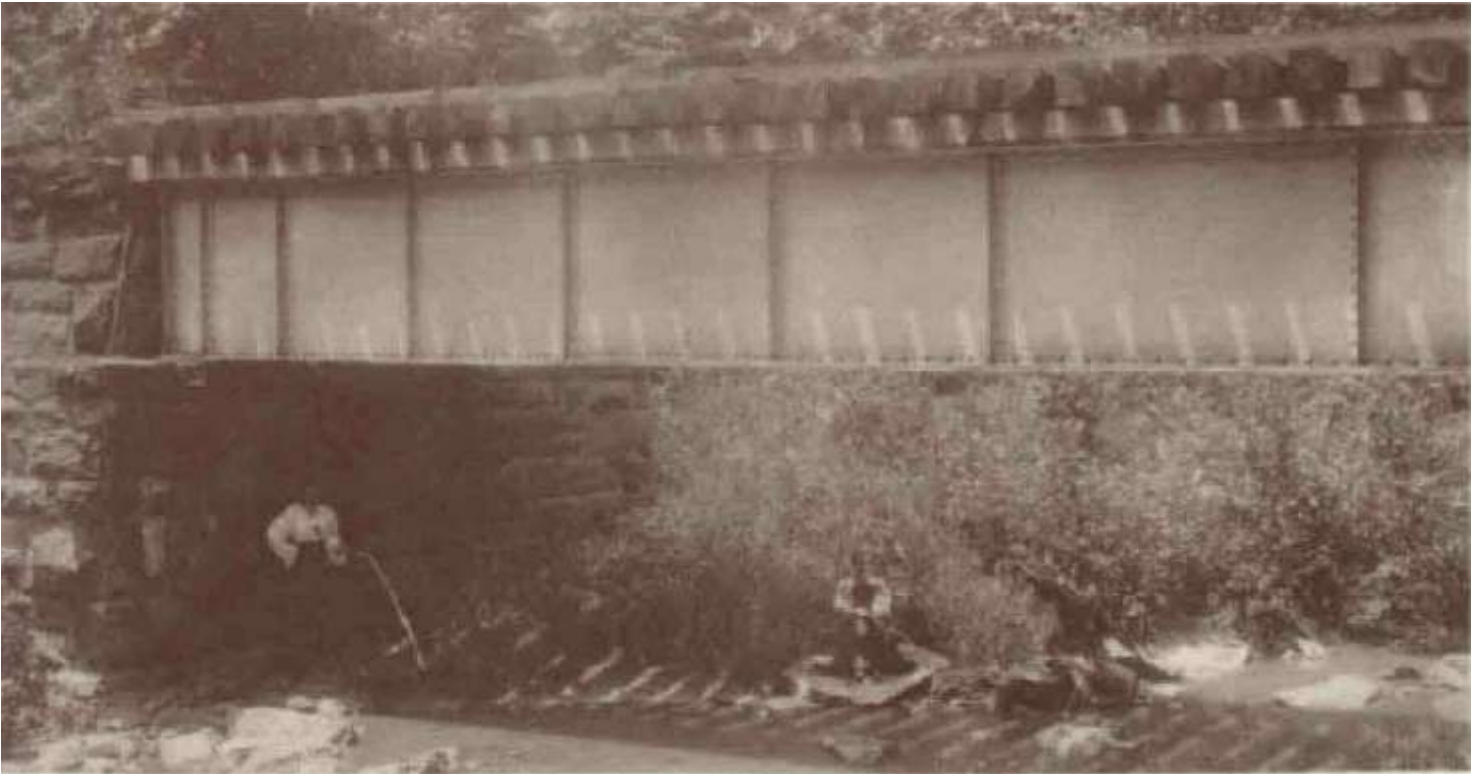
The rails are much easier on the feet than trying to walk on the ties. You can easily trip on the ties if you don’t pay attention and when you fall, it’s on the rough ties or the gravel between the ‘sleepers. The rails, on the other hand, let you look at where you are going and at the scenery without tripping. The only catch is staying on the rail. This requires some balancing skill.

It got to the point that staying on the rails became very easy. The furthest I got without losing my balance and falling off the rails was from Columbia Pike to the Jefferson St. Park. Of course, I always got off the rails and onto the ties to cross the trestles (bridges). That was the mature thing to do.

Youth and a challenge (or maybe just not wanting to get off the rails) led to the NEXT STEP. The next step was to walk the rails across the trestles over the streams. A combination of balance and overcoming acrophobia made this exciting. The view through the ties (2’ apart) is about 25’ down to the stream. The ties themselves stick out no more than a foot on either side of the rails. There are no hand rails on trestles! Not then, anyway. If you lost your balance, you should always fall toward the other rail. If you fell the other way you had better be able to fly or bounce ‘cause the next stop was the stream bed (20-30’ down).

One evening, with the sun beginning its slide to the horizon, I was halfway across the trestle walking the rail down by “pancake breakfast park,” I heard the unmistakable sound of the train com-

There were three trestles across the streams on the rail line (now bike trail) between Columbia Pike and Carlin Springs Rd. Two have a sort of blind curve on them and the third gives you a good



Old trestle over Four Mile Run Creek at “pancake park” (now a bike trail).

ing. It was coming FROM the west. I was headed TOWARD the west.

I looked up (I still didn’t trust myself on trestles not to watch every step on the rail) and the train was just coming around the bend with the setting sun just above its engine. It may have been called “The Virginia Creeper” but it certainly seemed to be coming awfully fast to me! I knew it was 25’ to the stream if I jumped (and I don’t fly or bounce!).

The engineer spotted me and, as a helpful gesture, pulled the cord on the air horn. He and I knew he couldn’t stop the train in time. I had frozen in mid stride on seeing the train. The air horn unfroze me and I took three long steps still precariously balancing on the rail and dove into the thorny weeds and bushes at the west end of the trestle. I rolled over several times down the steep slope in the scrub brambles and weeds as the engine and several loaded box cars chugged and rattled over the trestle above me. THAT was exciting!

view of the track (now bike path). From that day until they stopped running the trains in 1968, I always walked the ties over the two “blind curve” trestles. I still walked the third trestle on the rail but always kept an eye out for the train.



Alward Brother's garage circa 1993



ALWARD

BROTHER'S GARAGE

The car in front of us started up with a little blue haze from the exhaust pipe and began to move up the muddy ruts between the line of derelict cars. Dad dutifully started the old 1949 Plymouth station wagon and moved up one car length. The engine was turned off to wait the twenty minutes it took for each inspection to be done until it was our turn.

All communities have their support systems. For Glencarlyn there was the Hamilton's store in Glencarlyn (now Seven Eleven), Arlington Forest Center with the A&P food store, Drug Fair, a shoe repair shop, a hardware store and a few other shops in the Arlington Forest Shopping Center on Route 50 on our north side and Alward's Garage and Gearhardt's Hardware store on Columbia Pike on the south side.

Alward Brother's Garage was established after WW II on the south side of a two lane road (Columbia Pike) that went WAY OUT from Washington DC to Bailey's Crossroads (so named because it housed the winter time Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus).

It started with Mr. Thomas Alward, about five eight, very short gray hair and always dressed in blue coveralls with some grease stains on the front. He was the mechanic and his brother Billy,

bitter cold of winter and the scorching heat of summer out of a shack, doing the work on the ground. In the early 1950's the brothers paid to have a "garage" built which consisted of a large cinder block structure of @50' wide, @75' long with a flat tin roof fifteen feet high with two huge doors, one in front and the other on the side (and windows all around).

It started life with a heater and ended life with a heater. The first heater, well, Mr. Alward decided it used too much heating oil so he "adjusted" the fuel nozzle. It was then too lean and it blew up the heater. He never replaced it until someone sold him an oil burner in the early '90's that would burn the oil he changed out of the cars. It helped. Otherwise we used kerosene space heaters. When the kerosene smell got too bad or the place got 'warm' we unplugged the space heaters. On cold days, the smell was usually the reason to unplug the heater. Of course, every time the huge front door was opened for the next inspection, most of the heat in the building raced out the open door.

Mr. Tom Alward was the man you went to see to get your car fixed or to get the car inspected. Roy and Tom did a thorough look at the car without being overly nit picky. Since the car HAD to be inspected twice a year (VA state law), it paid to have a good trustworthy mechanic look at it who was NOT going to try to make a buck on every little thing. If Roy or Tom said it needed something, it needed it! They had more business than they could handle but could squeeze you in if necessary.

If you had bumped your car and just wanted the bumper pulled out, no problem. Mr. Alward had purchased a 'retired' airport cart puller which was also used for pulling planes. We affectionately called it 'the mule.' It had a four cylinder engine, one very dilapidated seat and about a thousand pounds of steel. It was no longer than a ride lawn mower but had 25" - 30" rear tires with smaller front tires. He would hook that up to the bent bumper on your car and get the "mule" up to 3 mph and your bumper was back where it was supposed to be (more or less). He charged ten bucks for "hay for the mule."

Want a more delicate aesthetic restoration? Louis Lee (the car body man) was there and he could do a wonderful job of making your car look like new. He could smooth the roughest dents, scratches or major faux pas to look like new and paint with such a smooth touch you couldn't tell the difference no matter how faded the original paint job.

Roy Tuck was a master mechanic. He had long fingers and a deft way of doing the hardest job with ease. He would be changing a Ford V-8 water pump at the same time he inspected three cars! Ford V8 water pumps were rumored to be hung in the middle of the Ford factory and then they built the car around them.

Mr. Alward could do pretty much the same but he could also trouble shoot a bad alternator and replace just the one diode that was causing the failure. That could save a hundred dollars off the cost of a repair in those days.

The "garage" itself was a mess! There was the lift for the inspection with a huge hand operated front door allowing the cars in and out. Everything looked like a jumble of old parts, tires, and who knew what. At least once a year an inspector from Fairfax County would come in. He would start at the front of the garage with a look of incredulity growing on his face as he went through this anachronism of the early 20th century. Where is the safety equipment? Where are the overrides for the lifts? One infraction after another was dutifully recorded. You could see the surprise grow and his pen would be going furiously. He was going to be the "Inspector of the Year!" What a disaster!

Usually on departing there would be some curt words exchanged to the effect of "I'll be back!" said in a menacing manner. But they never came back. Seems some very influential people loved the old ways of the garage and the report (and inspector) would somehow be sidetracked on something 'more pressing' and the old ways would continue.

Mr. Alward was a man who believed in alarm systems – sort of. After all, there were a great number of specialized and expensive tools hidden

(if you knew where to look!) Every evening at closing he would take a very long thread and weave it around the shop and attach one end to the direct phone line to his house (his wife would call to check on him during the day and tell him when lunch was ready). If somebody tried to break in, they would run into the thread and lift the phone off the receiver and Mr. Alward would call the police.

Personally, walking through that shop in the middle of a sunny day was risky, let alone at night.

For years Eric Carlson told me there was a vintage World War Two Willis Jeep parked in the back corner of the garage. I thought that Eric was pulling my leg. But it WAS there! One of the many “helpers” Mr. Alward hired (a young high school fellow) wanted to buy the jeep. After a year, Mr. Alward said ok. It took another six months of on and off again labor to restore the Jeep but it was finally ready to go and the helper, then graduated, drove it to Arizona! We think he made it.

Time marched on. Mr. Alward’s wife died. He had promised her he would retire in a year or so and they would be able to be together all the time instead of his 12 hour days at work six days a week. It became harder and harder for him to keep the garage going. He was lonesome after his wife died. I think he kept the garage open because he didn’t know what else he wanted to do. For a couple of years I would join him once a week or so to have lunch at Hot Shoppes.

Finally the shop was closed and the property sold to a developer who plowed the old garage and put up some fast food establishments and a town-house business center. It looks MUCH nicer – cleaner and just the way all those early inspectors wished the old garage were kept.

FIRE IN THE WOODS



NOT actual picture of fire in Glencarlyn park. Gratuitous attention getting shot from internet.

VV 4/2013

Fires sweeping over great expanses of timbered land have a visceral response from folks who live in a neighborhood surrounded on three sides by trees. When a goodly portion of the houses in Glencarlyn are wood frame structures there is an awareness of our vulnerability.

In my memory, we have NEVER had any major (or for that matter minor) fires in the woods around Glencarlyn (except for ... well, I'll get to it later). On a couple of occasions there were close calls, I thought, but nothing ever spread and endangered the neighborhood.

Does this have to do with our location (plenty of rain and moderate climate) or is it more of a response to carefully maintaining the park? Perhaps both.

Before the 50's, when real roads were put into the park, instead of the makeshift logging trails, keeping the park 'cleaned up' was on a neighborhood individual level. Hadassah Backus recalls in her memoirs the Scouts and the people with a personal interest in maintaining the park cleaning the debris from the footpaths. The Glencarlyn park itself was owned by the Glencarlyn neighborhood until it was turned over to Virginia in 1935 - 1936 (Arlington County had been offered the parkland in 1923 and declined).

When the park was turned over to the state it was with the express written agreement with the Glencar-

lyn citizens that the park was to be "used for parkland in perpetuity." Arlington

County did take over the control of the park from the state in 1943 (and began to operate it in 1945) with this same written stipulation. This transition of the park to the state and then the county was in part due to the taxing of the park property (13 acres at the time) which was paid by the Glencarlyn residents.

The county has done a great deal to keep the park free of the underbrush that feeds a fire. Included in that has been the removal of fallen trees and the fight against invasive plants such as English Ivy. Unfortunately, although irritating to a number of us, the Park Authority has NOT designated poison ivy as 'invasive.'

For a time the park management in the 60's

and 70's tried to stop erosion of the Long Branch stream bed (which leads to more downed trees and fuel for fires) with the use of bull dozers. These modern day rubber tired earth movers would literally work their way down the Long Branch stream bed and try to shore up eroding parts by putting stones on the most vulnerable parts of the stream. This has met with mixed success. Long Branch Stream starts as a small stream around Seven Corners. During storms it gets tremendous run off from the adjoining neighborhoods on its way to the Potomac.

Ah yes. There are two times that stand out in my mind as the possible start of fires in the park.

In 1958, Ken, Cecil, Fred and I were using a 40' long by one inch thick manila rope that had been tied to a tree limb over the Long Branch Creek to swing out and back to the bank. We had been at this for over an hour. It was a hot dry day in August and we were having fun but, because the stream was shallow, we couldn't let go of the rope and drop into the water.

Ken finally said this was fun, but he was mad because the rope was in the wrong place. None of us wanted to climb the tree and relocate the rope so Ken lit the bottom of it on fire (that made sense to us at the time). We all watched as the flame took over the bottom knot and then continued to climb the rope. Suddenly it dawned on us that it was very hot and dry and the rope would go up to the limb and MIGHT catch the woods on fire. We all jumped into the knee deep water and splashed water on the rope which quickly went out.

In 1963 we had a REAL fire in the woods that DIDN'T spread. It was in January. Ken, Cecil and I had built a 'fort' in the ravine behind my house. We thought it was too obvious so we covered it with leaves and branches. From a very short distance away, it appeared as nothing more than a refuse pile for yard waste. Inside, however, the 'fort' was a comfortable 8' X 12', with a 6 ½' ceiling dug into the hill. We insulated it with old rugs inside and then found a discarded wood stove and installed it with a nice short smoke stack that cleared the

leaves and limbs that covered our 'fort'. Mr. DeServio had given me a bunch of communication wire (Army surplus) which we had put together with multiple strands to run electricity to the 'fort' (about 200' from the house through a bunch of bushes etc.).

Inside the 'fort' it was all cozy and private when you had the fire going in the frigid January air (we had 'Global Cooling' in the 60's and 70's).

Cecil had decided to do his homework on Saturday morning in the 'fort.' The first we knew about any problems was when Cecil ran up to the house and beat on the door. He said the 'fort' was on fire. I asked why he didn't use the fire extinguisher to put it out (we had an old five gallon WWII hand pump fire extinguisher from Mr. DeServio too). "It's frozen solid!" (I told you it was COLD back then!)

Twenty minutes later, with most of the neighborhood watching from the sides of the ravine, the fire department put the fire out. Well, they wet the area around the fort to stop the spreading and the fort burned to the ground – nothing left!

Cecil, Ken and I were in the bottom of the ravine trying to get a garden hose to work on the fire when the fire company arrived (along with the neighbors). Cecil had an interesting note to excuse his lack of homework on Monday.

Over the many years the park has been here, it has resisted the problems associated with fires, even when given some good reasons not to.



David on skis (screened in porch – bedroom in background)

FIRST SKIS

VV 2/2013



Why did I wake up? Brrrrrr! It's cold! It's been cold other nights. So why ... OH! Snow?! On top of the bed? How did that happen? Hmmm. Well, they predicted snow. Guess

they were right for once. Maybe we'll get this Friday off from school? Billy will try to time it right and talk through the 'school closing messages' on the phone and line up a date. Hahahahaha! Who would have thought a public service phone message would let Billy line up a date!? Happened before!

Darn snow. Seemed like a good idea to sleep on the screened in porch in the summer. Probably the coolest place in the house. Still is! Hashahaha! Then it got colder but I stayed out here 'cause it was more private. Bathroom on the second floor makes this a problem in the middle of the night but

I've got my privacy.

Works great until the wind blows from the east and the snow blows through the screen. Time to get up! It's warmer here than between here and inside. Hmmm. I can smell the coal smoke from the fire and our oil burner is running. Someone is up. The pump behind the porch is running under the square hood. So quiet and muffled with all the snow.

No planes flying from Virginia Airport this morning. Bet the birds would be down on the pump cover getting the cantaloupe seeds mother put out there on Thursday for them. Can't get to the seeds under a foot of snow. I hope it's a foot! No Friday tests then. I guess prepping for tests shouldn't include praying for snow. But it may have worked.

Henry's dogs are in their kennel and quiet today. The Baker's wouldn't let their dog out on such a day. No barking dogs. How nice!

Dad will make us go out and shovel the walk. Billy will help some and so will Alan. I'll finish it though. Long way to shovel. Time to get up. The cover on the bed is wet from the snow melting! THAT'S why it's cold! Stupid snow!

Put your feet on the linoleum floor – oooooooooooooHHHHH! Snow on the floor too! Cold!

"Good morning, David? Sleep all right? You COULD sleep in today. NO SCHOOL!"

"EHH HAAAA! YES! No school! Let me just stand here over the heat vent and let the heat get me warm."

"Why don't you move up to your room upstairs? It's too cold for you to be out on the porch."

"I like it out there."

"Too cold!"

"I'm going upstairs to get changed."

"Oatmeal is ready when you are. Dad wants you guys to do the walk this morning. Your brothers are still in bed."

"Snow blew through the screen onto the bed. Let me change. I'll be down in a little while."

"Morning, David. They didn't deliver the paper this morning, Florence."

"I guess not! Dave Banya didn't get a paper delivery last night, probably. Turn on the radio – they'll have some news."

"More snow. Guess the paper was right about global cooling. Next ice age on its way."

"Henry Jarboe told David that's nonsense, Bill."

"Mrs. Rogers knows more than Henry. She teaches sixth grade and knows these things."

"It does seem colder. We're going to need some milk and eggs and bread."

"Hard going up to Hamilton's store in this weather. I'm sure not going to get the station wagon out in this mess. Too hard to walk! It's about a mile and the snow is deep."

"Send David out on the skis. He says he thinks it would be fun."

"Those old wooden skis from Vermont?"

"It's not too hilly. He won't get hurt."

"Might break the eggs coming back if Hamilton's has any left."

"He'll be careful."

Now I'm ready. The skis are strapped on tight over my rubber boots. Kinda loose but for the way I'm going, there will be no fast moves. Go up 5th St. and see the two houses that are being built. The going is slow but sure. See the Aunties' garden – all peaceful and covered with snow. Just push the skis forward in the snow using the ski poles. Good exercise.

This must have been like Jack London's To Build a Fire. Probably colder, though.

Go up to Lexington by St. John's Church - no bus came in this morning from Carlyn Springs Rd. Guess the snow was too deep for the public buses. Schultez's old brick house still boarded up. Wonder when he'll do something with it or the county will let him do something.

Hamilton's store. Dad says the Citizen's Association wants to close it. Something about selling Playboy to underage kids. I've never gotten one. DARN! David Hamilton says his dad doesn't care who he sells what to as long as the money is green. Old wooden house – store with a little bit of everything for the neighborhood. Hahahaha! EVERYTHING!

Mr. Carlson says we should keep the store – Seven Eleven is going to buy the property and we need some sort of store in our neighborhood. Mr. Carlson got so mad with the Association he

quit as the president and went to Richmond one day to fight the zoning change. Wonder how that will work.

Last dozen eggs! Score! Hope nobody takes the skis while I get this stuff.

In the back pack (who says Boy Scout back packs aren't useful)?

Cold going back. Wind picking up. The sun is breaking through. One minute the world is gray, the next it's a brilliant white landscape that hurts the eyes!

I'll go down 3rd St. by the library and then down Ben's hill. This will test the skis on a hill, such that it is. Hmmm. Can't go fast in the deep snow. Good workout! The air is so fresh. Guess the snow filters all the impurities out (except the wood smoke). So quiet!

"I'm home."

"Did they have everything?"

"Yeah, Dad. Got the last dozen eggs, too."

"Good for you. Have some cocoa and get warmed up. We've got the front walk to do."

GENERATORS!

The storm raged and the old house creaked to the fury of the wind and rain. Fall and the fifty degree weather outside was held at bay by the storm windows put in place the week before. The fireplace sputtered as the rain splashed into the coals. We're safe and sound and – the power goes out!

The coal fire continues to burn, of course but the house cools down as the storm buffets the house with mighty gusts of wind.

"That's it!" Said Dad. "We need a generator!"

"They're pretty expensive, dear."

"How many times does the power go down and we lose the food in the freezer."

VV 12/2012



"Well, talk to Mr. DeSirvio. He runs across all sorts of things."

"I'll call him .. Darn! The phone is out too."

"He couldn't get it tonight anyway."

"I'll call him tomorrow."

Mr. DeSirvio lived across the street and

traded in all manner of goods. His wonderful wife helped him but had a job as a school administrator in the District of Columbia.

Mr. DeSirvio was the Sgt. Bilko of civilian life. He could come up with anything, given enough time. I worked for him one summer in high school and we dealt with everything from oil based paint (in five gallon buckets – a lot of five gallon buckets) to hospital devices.

It took Mr. DeSirvio about a month to come up with the machine. It was vintage – in 1962 there were still a lot of 'surplus' items available from the war. This was a four cylinder device weighing about a thousand pounds or so and it came on its own 'skid' (a wooden palette under it). Mr. DeSirvio delivered it to our old garage and it fit snugly in the rear between the last garage support and the back wall. We drilled a two inch hole in the back wall for the exhaust pipe.

Dad was an electrical engineer so he decided, in the event of a power outage, all he had to do was pull the breakers from the outside power source and plug the generator into our house current and all would be well.

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The first noticeable item out of sorts was the exhaust pipe. It was cast iron and broken. The second item was Dad didn't know anything about engines (and at that age, neither did we) and this one needed a tune up. It had a hand crank (and it took a really strong hand to crank that baby) and a bad set of points. What that meant was, you could get a tremendous amount of exercise cranking the four cylinder motor and not get it to run.

With three of us cranking in series, we got it to fire up in the garage. The broken exhaust pipe let a bunch of exhaust fumes into the garage (it was a pretty leaky garage anyway) but it made one heck of a lot of noise!

We were set! We had a generator. One of the first in Glencarlyn! Capt. Shepherd had one (equally hard to start) and that was about it. We were proud. We couldn't wait for the next power outage.

And we didn't have that long to wait. It was about a month later, colder, and late at night when the power dropped out. Dad triumphantly strode out of the house to the garage. After a half hour, Dad came back in and reckoned that it wouldn't take the power company that long to fix the problem. It took two days. All during that time Dad said it wouldn't be long before the power was fixed. We still didn't use the generator. That was pretty much the story every time the power went out from then on. He would give it a try and then we'd wait for the power to be restored. It wasn't bad in the summer – there wasn't any air conditioning anyway. In the winter (and the power didn't really go out that often in the winter) it was cold and miserable. It was uncomfortable whenever the power went out. And we did still lose the freezer stored food if the power stayed out for a few days.

I remember a couple of times when the power went out and we had to watch TV by candlelight!

Sometime in the late 1980's, Mother had the generator removed from the garage. I don't know who got it or any of the details – who paid who for the privilege of becoming the new owner. I'm certain that generator ran at least once over those years - when Mr. DeSirvio put it into the garage and showed us how easy it was to use. No matter what else can be said about that machine, we were one of the first citizens in Glencarlyn to own a generator!



House at 5432 S. 5th St. as it looked when renovation completed in 1926. Old houses have interesting stories.

VV 10/2011



THINGS THAT GO 'BOO' IN THE NIGHT

In church the other Sunday, the person giving

the sermon spoke about the new Bible, not the King James version. She said she was reading from Genesis, "And God created all things seen and unseen." Not quite the rhythm of the King James, but it is interesting – this encompasses the minute particles of atoms to the infinity of space, and also, maybe, other dimensions.

Glencarlyn has been around since the late 1800's. There were rumors about the ghost of the headless fiddler down by the old pavilion (in the park at the end of Jefferson St., close to the Carlyn Springs). There's something special about haunted places and houses! Some of our houses go back to the 1800's, many others have been the object of 'bulldozer races' – demolished to make way for new houses. In the spirit of the season (Halloween) there should be some thoughts about the ghost stories surrounding these houses. I don't know many but

First, are there ghosts? Not to get too philosophical about it, yes. We live and understand our three dimensional world, somewhat, but there probably are other dimensions that we don't understand (Rod Serling – The Twilight Zone).

In these old houses, there have been some tragedies along with the joys. There was one fellow who became very despondent and hung himself in his house in the 20's. The house has been demolished.

Since the neighborhood dates so far back, there have been others who lived and died in their home, not wishing to spend their last hours in a hospital. This is so with all older communities and nothing to be overly concerned about. Spirits, like people, are friendly, or not, or just go on with their existence in another dimension and don't care what happens in this dimension.

Our house was a good example of such spirits. How can we be sure? Well, we've seen a couple of them!

My dad died here in 1971, having a heart attack in the hall in front of the stairs. My mom died in 1997 close by. Her spirit was very much tied to the house and still makes her presence known from time to time. My older brother, Billy, died in 1965. He was always close to the house.

Who saw what and when? In 1974 my soon to be wife, Maxine, came over to the house to see Mother and the house. We finished the tour of the house together and walked out to the back yard. Maxine turned to look at the house and saw a figure in the end bedroom window. She asked me who was in the house. "No one. We're all out here."

She shook her head 'no, we're not all out here.' And then she pointed to the end upstairs window. I quickly looked; there was nothing there.

When we went back into the house I checked to see if anyone else had come in. No.

Two things I've always known about Maxine. She's a lovely lady and she's not nuts! To

direct her and my attention away from "imagined" people, I showed her the old pictures of our family. There were pictures of Grandfather and Grandmother Backus, Grandmother Crabb, my great aunts, and some old pictures of our family growing up in the village.

We got to the set shot of the whole family when we boys were all in school (Alan and I in Jr. high, Billy a senior in high school). There was a slow pause, as if she were thinking of something. Then she asked about Billy – how was he doing. "Billy? He died in 1965 of Leukemia. Why?"

With her finger on the old picture of Billy, she said, "That's who I saw in the upstairs end window when we were in the back yard." That had been Billy's bedroom.

Our next remarkable sighting was in 1980 when a friend, Bill Bezich, stayed overnight at the house. There had been some break-ins during the previous months in the neighborhood and we didn't want to leave the house unattended while my mother had left on a trip and we were out of town. Bill said he would stay over and watch the house for us.

Bill is a very competent mechanic, a good friend, and is, interestingly enough, somewhat psychic. The last attribute is not something he advertises, but we have found, over the years, he is sensitive to this other world.

During the night he slept in the master bedroom on the second floor. He woke up in the middle of the night feeling he was being watched. Bill said he could feel cool air (it was a warm evening) and he looked around to see what was happening. There was a mirror in the hall which he could see from the bed that usually gave a reflection of the south facing window. There was a three quarter moon that night so he should have seen the light streaming in the window. The light was blocked by something. Something dark, large, and moving.

Bill said he could feel a presence that he thought was not hostile to him but seemed merely curious. This still made Bill very nervous! The fig-

ure, still blocking the mirror, came forward and peered into the bedroom at Bill. Bill waited and watched from the bed, getting more and more upset by this silent gossamer night visitor. Seemingly satisfied, the apparition turned and disappeared. The mirror was now totally visible letting Bill see the window with the moonlight flooding in.

Bill jumped up and went into the hall. When he got there no-one was there but the air was chilled.

He asked us the next day if we had tried to play a trick on him. We said 'no way!' He had seen the old photograph of dad in the living room and said that was who it looked like. All we could figure is dad was checking to make sure Bill was a legit visitor. Soon after this experience, unknown to my mother, we had Bill over to ask the spirit world what was up. He asked many questions in a séance with us present which lasted a half hour. One of the questions was, "Are there spirits in the house?" The answer was a very affirmative "yes!" "Are these spirits friendly." Again, a very affirmative, "YES!" Friendly spirits or not friendly, Bill never volunteered to stay at our house again.

When we renovated the house, we asked several knowledgeable people about spirits in houses. One theory was that lifting an old house off its foundation severed the spirit's connection. We didn't do that. After all, Bill said the spirits are friendly.



David (finally) learns to ride a bike!



VV 11/2012

LEARNING TO RIDE A BIKE

As I watch the neighborhood get re-populated with children and the joys and noise of their growth (it's good to hear the 'growing pains' again reverberate in Glencarlyn), I'm reminded of when I learned to ride a bike. This is a true 'right of passage' for a child and opens grand new vistas in geographic boundaries.

Most folks remember some "first"

in their lives. Learning to walk must have been fantastic! That opened all sorts of new mischief for myself (probably) but new pride and worries for my parents, I'm sure. But remember it? No. But learning to ride a bike? That one remains in my mind forever! It's a true epiphany when you master the balance required – and it stays with you forever after. It's a turning point – a true physical accomplishment and joy you never outlive (I hope).

When I saw my contemporaries graduate from foot transportation to the more mobile two wheeled

conveyances, it became **imperative** that I should gain this new freedom. When I approached my dad for a bike he was very supportive. "Get a bike and we'll work on it." Hmmm. Get a bike?

I could earn this by mowing lawns, selling "rich dirt" (a bag at a time mined from the ravine behind the house – very labor intensive), lemonade stand in front of the house or scavenging.

In the early spring, necessity and a good eye for scavenging soon led to a 'used' item available on 5th St. as the land was being prepared for the new houses in the 5500 hundred block. This gleaming gem (rusty rims, faded paint and rear flat tire) didn't look like much but I was a **VERY** price conscious shopper.



Dad and Billy work on bicycle

This somewhat abused, wide tired, American Flyer soon shone with the application of a lot of love, elbow grease and new found mechanical skill on my part (helped by my dad and the chiding of my brothers).

Now came the heavy lifting of learning to ride this mechanical marvel. It was at least one size too big for my young body but, with a little jump as I pushed, I could get onto the seat. This giddy perch lasted about five feet when I would fall onto the front lawn and the bike would sprawl beside me. Sure I practiced on the lawn! Grass is much more forgiving than asphalt! Dad had a mixed review of the tradeoffs of ruined grass and road rash / ripped clothes. Mom didn't like all the green smudges from the ground in grass, but it was certainly less expensive than patching the clothes or replacing skin.

Self taught wasn't going to make it. Dad decided that 5th St. was more precarious than 4th St. for learning purposes. Seems they had just repaved the 5400 block of 4th street and this beat the pot holed 5th St. as a launching pad for bikers. We would walk the bike up the dirt road that was Illinois St. and make a right onto the newly paved surface of 4th St.

Dad would stabilize the bike while I swung my leg over the seat and hop up. He would then let me get my feet on the pedals, review what we were going to do and run along beside me as I would try to master this new art. We would try about four or five "tries" where he would get me up to speed and then remove his support as he lopped along beside until he saw the wayward journey of my imbalance taking over and quickly stabilize the situation. Dad was great but not in the best of condition. Still breathing hard he would say that was enough for the day and we would roll the bike back to its resting place on the front porch.

I loved that bike! Sturdy? Amazing! It took all those falls in stride. I was determined but never seemed to get that 'spark' of balance inspiration. I would try and try and ... well, it got monotonous. The outcome was still the same and my friends would make fun of me. "As big as you are" (and I was big for my age), "you're still walking? Hahaha-hahahhahahhaa!" That hurts! I redoubled my efforts (which increased the laundry load in the same proportion). Dad saw my frustration and we made treks to 4th St. every day with the same results.

FRUSTRATION! Summer was waning and I was still walking. Except when I ran to keep up with my friends – that was embarrassing and motivating too.

Then it happened. One Sunday, very late in August, I woke up early and just had to give it another try! I walked the bike out onto our grassy front lawn and set myself for the umpteenth try to learn!

The sun was bright and the grass still had the dew on it – the birds were singing (probably – I was too wound up to remember) and the task

awaited.

I slung my leg over the seat, gave a mighty push and jumped up onto my precarious perch which had 'thrown' me so often before. It burst through! The synapses took the new path. YESSS! That's what it is! That marvelous feeling of balance flooded my body and I KNEW what this bike thing was all about! So simple a child could do it! A miracle but so basic! WOW! My mind exploded with the congratulations and jubilation of opening this new door to mobile freedom!

"EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
EEE – HHHHHHHHHHHHHHAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

My parents (Sunday at 7:30am) and still blissfully in bed, were not amused (as they told me later after my enthusiastic rendition of my accomplishment).

The bike picked up speed going down the front lawn. Total bliss – jubilation! And it went faster. WOW! Faster than I can run! Wow!

The yard disappeared and my total joy and excitement diminished immediately as I realized all the implications of making it past my usual place sprawled on the grass. Before me loomed a new choice. The brick wall, the shed, the huge immovable maple tree or, miss all those, and go down the very steep back lawn into the numerous immovable trees beyond.

In all my yearning to 'go' on the bike I had neglected the simple (but basically needed) knowledge to 'stop.'

I knew it had something to do with reversing the peddles but ... excitement will sometimes overcome knowledge of consequences. Joy was suddenly displaced with major fear of the outcome. Instead of leading my friends on their merry excursions on two wheels I could see myself the center of a scene of mourning. How quickly a mood can be ruined!

The wall seemed the least lethal of the alternatives and I shakily aimed the bike that way. When the inevitable happened, I soared over the

immediately stopped front tire and landed on the other side of the wall in a heap. My first thought was "HEY, I'M OK!" My second thought, "I KNOW HOW TO RIDE A BIKE!" My third, somewhat belated thought was, "I'm going to make sure I know how to stop that thing!"

The fat front tire (and rim) on my trusty bike seemed impervious to my folly – no damage!

My parents were very happy with my new found skill. My brothers, grudgingly, admitted I had come (somewhat) of age.

Many years later, when my daughter was learning, she had training wheels on her bike. She learned so quickly and easily. She must have inherited that ability from me – that sort of first "WOW!" moment of balance. That must have been transmitted in the genes. Of course, she had her times as well. Once she rolled off the bike trail onto a steep grassy hill in Glencarlyn park. As I watched, unable to do anything for her, she properly applied the brake. All would have been well except that she was leaning on one training wheel leaving her rear 'stopping' tire off the ground and useless. I held my breath and she went down the hill, the rear wheel leveled onto the grass and she stopped. I praised God she didn't have to take the spill of my first experience to understand how these wonderful machines worked.



Christmas in April



MANLY TEST

AKA Testosterone test. Definition: A chore done once a year (sometimes more often) requiring unusual exertion to perform which test your abilities. I.e. lifting and moving heavy and/or unwieldy objects. Most intelligent folks won't do this. Men will! Or, at least try!

The first time I realized that such tests existed was early in my life in Glencarlyn. One of the first chores of magnitude I was given was enlarging the cellar (our cellar was hand dug by my grandfather and my mother wanted it 'extended'). This task was 'assigned' by my mother with my father's permission.

Alan, Billy and I dutifully went downstairs with shovels, a pick and several coal buckets and began the task of moving the hard packed clay. We could smell the fresh dirt and the small buckets were soon filled. We each took one bucket to the side of the ravine and dumped it. We then had an informal confab and decided the job was more than we had anticipated. At the rate we were going this could take more than a few days. It took granddad over six months to complete the original hand dug cellar. That was the first "t" test and we decided NOT to pursue the project any further.

When you live in a house that was "renovated" (by our grandparents, Dad and his two siblings) in 1920 to 1926 (and it was now 1955), there is ALWAYS something to keep you occupied.

The next 't' test was the tin roof. The 'tin' roof was not tin but galvanized steel, which after many years, needed painting. This involved climbing to the top of the two story house (acrophobia is something I've always had) and laying down a layer of 'aluminized' asphalt paint. How could you tell when it was time to paint such a roof? When the upstairs got REAL hot in the summer because the aluminum paint would slowly erode until the black asphalt underneath would show and get REAL hot.

We would do the roof about every five years. For the paint, the temperature had to be over seventy. It was dirty, it was sweaty, it was messy, dangerous and scared the dickens out of me. But we did it! The second 't' test was always a success. Dad said so! It was forty to fifty feet to the hard earth on the back side of that old roof and Dad wanted it painted to the edge! You did the edge FIRST! And you NEVER painted yourself to the edge since the only way out then was over the side!

Then came the age of the Volkswagen. These were fun cars but needed some work. This 't' test was one of manly strength. The idea was to lower the engine out of the car (a 2X12 and an old log in the front yard) and then carry the engine to the garage to be rebuilt before Dad got home at six. The engines weighed one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds (depending whether it was the old 1200 or the newer 1600 model). It wasn't real bad with two folks but the real "t" test was when you had to lift and carry the engine yourself.

College and grad school didn't seem to have too many such tests. Sports (swimming, Karate and Judo) but, well, not the solo test yourself against in inanimate object stuff.

Then we bought a house and it had no central air conditioning. We finally succumbed and I got a wonderful, only slightly used 10,000 btu air conditioner. It was big and heavy and All I had to do was lift this 200 pound space age appliance from its home in the summer (in the dining room window) down a narrow flight of stairs into the basement where it rested comfortably until the next year. Every year I would wait for Maxine (my wife) and Adriana (our daughter) to be out of the house and undertake that task. Yes, my friends, the only way to properly describe this ritual is "outstandingly dumb!" But it was a pleasure to surprise them with the change of the air conditioner each spring and fall.

Another memorable "t" test was the deck put on the back of that house. The back yard of the house went from a mangy collection of grass, crab-

grass, dandelions, and assorted other specimens of greenery to a full 20' X 30' deck. This was made of 2" X 12" planks and the supports were even stronger! It took two weeks, a couple of very nice friends and \$1,200 of pressure treated lumber. It was one of the hardest jobs I've ever done. When we sold that house (ten years later) the hot tub (OH YES WE DID!) and the deck were still there and so inviting under the 50' shade of the Catawba tree (which we had cut the wood of the deck to accommodate).

Two last "t" tests come to mind. My daughter always seemed to get a place at college on the second floor. They were all walk ups. Guess who had the honor of carrying the small refrigerator up the stairs, down the hall and to the new accommodations? No wussy hand trolley for me (I guess the "t" could stand for a lot more than just testosterone).

After all these years, I've limited my "t" test. The brain has finally caught up with and begun to understand that, instead of "use it or lose it" mentality to "Abuse it and you might lose it permanently" mentality. But I did succumb to the "save a tree" idea of a synthetic Christmas tree. It's so beautiful! It already has the lights installed! It looks so real! It comes in three parts. All steel! It weighs a total of 150 lbs. How did I miss THAT little item on the label before we bought it? This is finally the last frontier. It lives in the basement. Or should. I must admit, after all these years, there is something unique about a Christmas tree in the middle of the living room in July.

PROMS: HOW WE ALMOST DIDN'T GET OUR DEPLOMAS!



VV 5/2013

There have been three high schools in Arlington since the late '50's. Those schools are Yorktown, Washington-Lee (W-L), and Wakefield. My school was Wakefield and my graduating class in 1964 was VERY LARGE! We had hundreds of fine young men and women get their diplomas on a warm spring evening in June. But we almost didn't get the diplomas due to ... well, a "misunderstanding" that happened at our Senior Prom.

That was the year we were supposed to work hard (both academically and physically) to get the last good grades that might make the difference of getting into the school of our choice and getting the money together to pay for the education. The academics were hard and "senioritis" was rampant (skipping classes, not taking the classes seriously, and, in general, slacking off being the rule of the day for many seniors).

In this early spring the opportunity arose for me to attend all three high school senior proms (one friend from church, one from the neighborhood who moved to the W-L district, and, of course, one from my school). Conveniently, these proms were held on consecutive nights of the same week (saving on tux rental).

The W-L prom was held on Thursday night, the Yorktown prom on Friday, and the Wakefield prom on Saturday. Needless to say, most folks who attended the WL prom on Thursday were not really expected to show up on Friday. I went to Wakefield and was expected at school on Friday.

How were the proms and how did they differ?

W-L had rented The Potomac Boat Club for their prom. This is where the rowing shells for this nationally known rowing team are stored. This roomy old established "club" is located on the DC side just upriver from Key Bridge. Parking was under the Key Bridge on Water St. which runs along the river (below the Whitehurst Freeway).

The Potomac Boat Club is a venerable old wooden building which has the wonderful feel and scent of old wood, the Potomac, and the general rustic qualities of a building long established on the side of the river.

When Dorothy and I got to the prom, the lights were dim, the music was loud, and the humid warm air suffused with the scent of perfume, after shave, carnations, cigarette smoke, and the Potomac River. This and the racing shells gave it an ambiance of tradition and permanence (which is something W-L symbolized since it is the oldest high school in Arlington).

The crowd was very happy with the outlook of graduating. The girls were decked out in beautiful prom dresses, new hair do's, high heels, which were hard going on the rough Water Street pavement and the wooden planking of the weathered boat house floor. Each girl looked fresh and lovely with the flowers pinned on the front of her formal prom dress. The guys all wore tuxedos, shined shoes, and boutonnieres.



The Potomac Boat House from the pretty side.

The rough wooden “dance floor” was crowded with the warmth of lots of folks dancing and having punch and dancing some more. There may have been some “other” drinking, but, for the most part, Dorothy and I found most of the folks very happy, dancing madly to the fast tunes and indecently to the slow songs.

The crowd began to melt away after one o'clock or so with Dorothy and I being among the last to leave. Mr. DeServio, our neighbor in Glen-carlyn, had lent me his new 1963 Chevy Bel Aire for the night. After crossing the Key Bridge I made the right turn onto the GW parkway and kicked the accelerator of the Chevy, just as I usually did in Dad's '56 VW. When we got halfway up Spout Run, we weren't doing the customary 60 mph of the VW but somewhere north of 90! I pulled into the right lane, hit the brakes and then saw an old rust colored Renault Dauphine with four teenagers driving against the traffic on Spout Run, lights out, headed down the lane I'd just vacated. Dorothy and I just looked at each other and breathed a sigh of relief.

Friday at Wakefield was something to remember. I don't! After school I do remember working in the gym to get it ready for the prom, then busing home and taking a shower and a short nap then getting ready for the Yorktown prom.



The Willard ball room.

Beverly (from church) and I double dated and went to dinner before going to the Willard Ho-

tel ballroom for this prom (the Willard was later closed for many years starting in 1968). The other couple had a nice new Lincoln town car and Mr. DeServio hadn't lent me the Bel Aire that night. After careful consideration, we left Dad's newly waxed '56 VW at Beverly's place and used the Lincoln.

When we got to the Willard Hotel it was majestic. This was high class all the way. Yorktown's prom had a wonderful feel all together different from the W-L prom. From the valet parking to the classic surroundings of the ballroom, this was amazing. The dresses were elegant, the flowers were fragrant and beautiful. The lights were somewhat brighter in the ballroom, the music was a little more refined, the scent was, perfume, punch, after shave, flowers and some cigarette smoke. No smell of the Potomac or old wood on the eleventh floor of the Willard Hotel. Just the wonderful aroma of a very proud established hotel.

The dancing was fast but controlled to the lively tunes of an orchestra (not just a band) and the dancing somewhat less indecent to the slow songs. The interaction of the couples was slightly more formal and the chaperones were more obvious. No problem here with high heels. The entrance to the hotel was marble and there was a smooth wooden dance floor in the ballroom. Around two we left the hotel and went for a late snack.

Around four the VW found home. One more to go. And this one I had helped prepare, even when I was half asleep on Friday. The theme was “under the sea.” For this we had hung rented “fish” from the gym rafters made out of a “threaded” multicolored fiberglass so the fish glistened in the lights. We also stapled some of the fiberglass fish to the bulletin boards and had some other decorations that made the gym seem, well, less like a gym.

April (from my school) and I had dinner and headed for the gym in the VW. There was no trouble with high heels on the cement walk to the school from the student parking lot and the wonderful polished wooden gym floor was no problem

either since we weren't allowed to wear shoes on Mr. McCulloch's (the head coach) gym floor.

The lights were dim and the band played and there was enough room for everyone in the large gym. The fast dances were fast and the slow dances, well, they seemed to entail a lot of shuffling with not too many Fred Astair moves.

The scent of the Wakefield prom was of perfume, aftershave, carnations and the "je ne sais quoi" of the gym. No smoking close to this party. This was "school turf."

Around eleven the band struck up "Roll out the barrel" (a polka) and April and I had the dance floor to ourselves. We covered the entire floor from band to entrance, to the rolled up bleachers on either side. The rest of the crowd just stood around and watched as we caught the beat and whirled around the floor, the only two in the entire room that knew how to do the polka (or at least the only two who tried).

As we left the gym to go to the after prom pool party, April and I stopped in front of the fiber glass dolphin that I had stapled to the bulletin board on Friday. "That's so beautiful!"

"Would you like it?"

"Sure. But?"

"Nobody will miss this fish." April cradled the three foot shimmering fiberglass dolphin in her arms on our way to the VW. This was THE "misunderstanding."

Monday morning we found out just how much somebody missed the fish. We had eight o'clock homeroom announcements. The first one concerned the purloined dolphin. "Whoever has the dolphin from the prom, please return it. If it is not returned we will NOT distribute the diplomas at graduation. The fish costs \$150 (\$600 in today's currency) and we want it back!"

I met April for lunch and we talked while we monitored the music (we were in charge of the music for 'senior' lunch). "They're kidding! Let's wait! I really like it."

The next day the same enticement / threat was announced by Mr. Johnson (vice principal) at 8am. "NO FISH, NO DIPLOMAS!" Our resolve folded and we returned the fish. They said there would be "no questions asked" on the PA system. When we got to the office with the dolphin, they didn't ask. You could tell they WANTED to ask but they didn't. With the fish returned, the diplomas were issued on that warm evening in June. Would they have held our diplomas? We'll never know.

What a week!



Wakefield students dance a torrid twist in the **BROOKVILLE** pool.

Pool party after the Wakefield prom. (if you've seen one gym, you've pretty much seen them all!)



Shepherd house with fallen tree—2012

TREES THAT HAVE FALLEN INTO OUR LIVES



Captain Shepherd's house after near miss during Hurricane Sandy

VV 3/2013

Just as the old Irish saying, “May you live in interesting times,” can be seen as a mixed blessing, so does the thought, “May you live in a quiet tree lined neighborhood.” Glencarlyn has been such an oasis of trees and tranquility since the 1930’s or so and this is also a mixed blessing.

Glencarlyn was originally used for farming so there were great open vistas of land without trees but as Henry Jarboe said to me one day in 1956, “The darn ravine (behind his house) filled up with those weeds while I was away (during WW2)!” He was talking about the 50 foot oaks and poplars that made his hillside a cool oasis for keeping our

houses from overheating in the summer. Over the years of not being farm land, Glencarlyn filled up with lovely oaks, maples, elms, poplars, pines and other trees.

Some of the “mixed blessings” lately have been Michael and Kelly Krug’s house (5501 3rd St. S.) which has been hit with two separate trees over a few years interval (the second one almost got Michael Krug in 2012). The Kruth house at 5413

5th St. S. also had a tree fall onto its roof (taking over eight months to get repaired). Doug and Lynne were safe in the basement at the time (11:30pm). Another tree fell next door (5417 5th St. S., the Ruscus’ house) not hurting anyone but taking out the power of 23 residents for several days. The same storm took out the magnificent oak on the side of 5527 3rd St. S., the past residence of Capt. Shepherd. No one was hurt (thank goodness) in any of these instances although there were some close calls (with Michael Krug) and two cars were immediately customized at the Ruscus’ house and across the street at the Khambatta’s house on 5th St.

This last tree actually saved the lives of the Krug family. When Ruscus’ tree fell, it not only took out the power lines to 23 neighbors, but it also got the communication line for the Krugs’ TV. Kelly, Michael and their child were on the couch watching a show on TV while the storm raged outside. When the communication line went out, Kelly and the child went upstairs to read. Michael went to the kitchen table to work on the computer. A half hour later their tree fell crushing the couch where they had been and smashing in the back wall, blowing

Michael back eight feet on his castor chair and crushing the table and his computer!

Another tree right next door crushed three decks on the back of Randy and Ann Krug's house at about the same time.

Is this usual? Not really. We've loved our trees – kept them pruned and watched them dance in the wind with no real consequences. Aside from severe storms stressing the old trees, there have been few "spontaneous" tree droppings. Historically two fallen trees do come to mind however. One fell on our house in 1959 – but it had long since died and was being held up by the honeysuckle and wisteria (which grew up the supporting tree and then strangled it).

The second tree fell on our neighbor's house with no helping wind – just fell at 6:40am on a calm summer morning. These trees that have fallen in the neighborhood over the years have a few things in common. All have been old (both of the Krug's, Captain Shepherd's, the houses on 5th St. and the tree in our back yard, all over 80 years old), all have been oaks, and all have looked very healthy (well Not the wisteria strangled dead one).

The Arlington Arborists and the tree trimming folks agree there are but two ways to find out if an old tree is healthy. One, take a core sample (drill into the tree trunk to see if it is decayed inside) as well as check the roots, or, two, cut it down and look. In the core sample process, you may damage the tree and MAY start the process of decay. In the second – well that sort of finishes any further discussion.

After the two trees fell on 5th St., (the Ruscus' had spent extra time and money when they did their renovation to save their tree which took out the power lines during Hurricane Sandy), the next house up (5421 5th St. S.) which also was having a beautiful renovation done and had spent time and money to keep an old oak, decided to take their oak down before it went down. When it was taken down, there were no flaws in the tree at all.

Have we had other times when we lost so many trees? Hurricane Hazel (in 1954) took out a bunch of trees, but they were mostly in the park. I

don't remember any houses being damaged in that storm in Glencarlyn.

We did, however, have the Dutch elm disease which devastated the elms in our neighborhood in the 50's. This beetle vectored disease from Asia hit the US and Europe very hard. We had a majestic elm in the back yard (60' tall, at least). It had to be over one hundred years old and spread a beautiful canopy of shade and peace. When the disease hit, it took two weeks and our tree went from lush green to a skeleton of dead limbs.

When the elm died, being a "do it yourself" type person I tried to help the family by using Dad's new Sears 30' aluminum ladder to climb up the tree with a hand wood saw and take the tree down for firewood (I was determined but not very practical). I was smart enough to sit on the "tree side" of the first limb I cut, but not physics minded enough to figure where the limb would fall. The ladder turned out to be right underneath the limb's trajectory. Our family immediately became the proud owners of a Sears 25' 'somewhat used' aluminum ladder when the dead limb fell on the bottom of the new ladder. Mom repositioned what was left of the ladder against the tree to get me down. The rest of the tree was handled professionally.

Just as "interesting times" has a dual meaning, the loss of our majestic trees and cool shade also means we have a great deal of firewood VERY locally available.



Sky view of house / Henry Jarboe's house today 2013



AND A "BEAUTIFUL VIEW OF THE WOODS!"



Henry Jarboe was our neighbor to the east in the '50's living in 5426

5th St. S. He, his mother and his wife lived in a very nice house that he had used stonework to change from ordinary to very nice looking. He was a very accomplished bricklayer and stonemason. My great aunts used his skills to build a couple of wonderful stone walls that seemed almost impervious to anything until they got taken down during construction in 2004. I tested one of his creations with an American Flyer bicycle: the walls were **VERY STRONG!** (Learning to ride a bike, please see page 108)

He did not endear himself to my parents although we three boys thought he was very colorful. When he returned from a hunting trip and proceeded to hang a deer

on his tree out front and "dress" the deer – well, that's when mother got pretty upset. "Dressing a deer" has nothing to do with fashion statements.

Some of the other "colorful activities" he displayed included trying to shoot an owl just by aiming his shotgun where the hooting was coming from (the owl quickly changed venues) and letting his dogs bark day and night on "the point" of his property in their kennels.

His wife left sometime in the early 50's and his mother stayed on for awhile listening to our phone conversations on the party line.

After his mom died, Henry decided it was time to move on. He owned several acres and decided to develop the land. His first venture was in front of his house. On the north side of 5th St. there were three houses (two have been 'reconstructed in 2011 – 2012). On Henry's south side of the street, aside from Henry's and our house, there were none and the street ended just below his driveway.

He spent several months building a strong

brick house looking down into the park (5424 5th St. S.). This house had a “beautiful view” into the wooded park at the end of the street. He put the house on the market and sold it (and the beautiful view) to a nice couple within a few weeks.

Several months later, he started on the next house in line (5422 5th St. S.) blocking the “beautiful view” from the first house. It took a little less time (Henry was faster the second time). Again, the house was put up for sale with – you guessed it “a beautiful view of the woods.” The house, again, sold quickly.

But Henry owned ALL the land from the “end” of 5th Street to just short of the park (where the parking lot at the end of 4th St. is, to 70 yards short of Long Branch Creek on the south side). Did Henry – one at a time build more houses? NO, of course not.

Henry sold the entire parcel of land to a developer (later named Ditmar Developers). Actually, he sold HIS house first – and since it was the house that was recessed from 5th St. in the woods, it – well, had “a beautiful view of the woods!” That view lasted a few months and then the developer moved in with bull dozers and other heavy equipment and began the process of tearing down the “point” (where the dog pens had been) and moving the dirt to make a flat area in the ravine for construction for the two houses on the lengthened 5th St. S. and the Harrison St. cul de sac .

Henry, of course, moved to, we guess, Fairfax or beyond, taking his dogs and shotgun with him.

The Carlson’s, living at 410 Harrison St. South, were concerned that their southern “beautiful view of the woods” had become the site of a red clay demolition derby of construction. They checked with the county and there were no plans the county could find, yet the construction continued. The plans were later “found” when the project was half done.

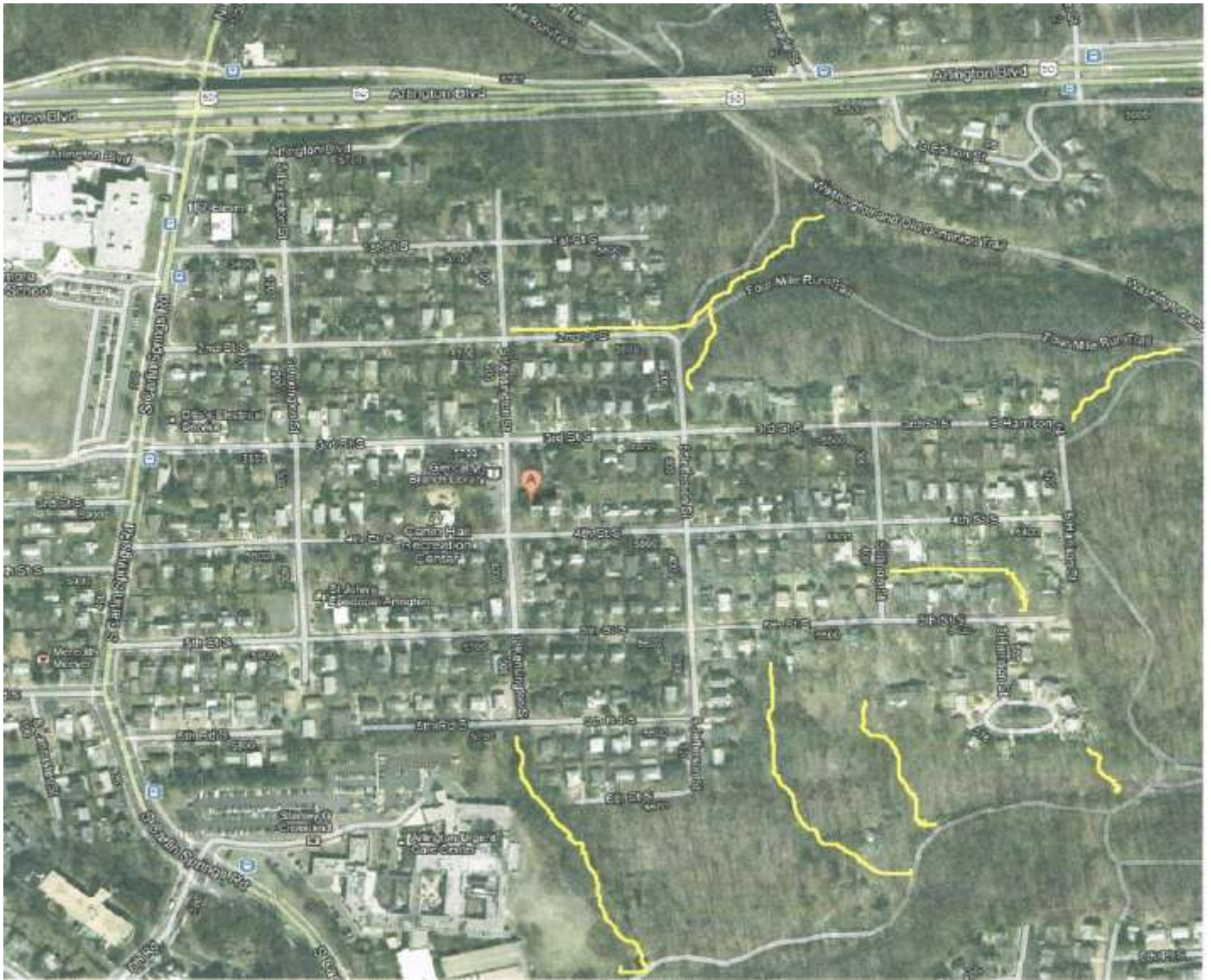
Today it is illegal to build a house on fill dirt. It’s not safe because the dirt can shift. This was the

‘50’s. They plowed Henry’s “point” (50’ above the ravine) and smoothed the dirt out onto the steep slopes of the ravine for building lots.

For many months the process continued and in the end, the “beautiful view” of the original two houses (well, actually, only the second house built) became a beautiful view of 12 new homes with, ahem, “a beautiful view of the woods” This time the woods belonged to Arlington County and has stayed mainly as it was.

And everyone lived happily ever after. Well, not really. There is a reason for the building codes (regarding building on fill dirt). In the early 1970’s, the four houses on the south side of the “loop” of Harrison St. S. noticed their houses were having problems with water pipes. Seems the fill dirt started to head for Long Branch Stream, along with the houses. A foot wide split appeared in the wooded circle which cut the houses’ water pipes among other inconveniences.

Ditmar and Arlington County solved the problem somehow and the houses are safe now. Well, except for the time the fire hydrant at the top of the circle burst and flooded the lower area in the 80’s. Then the sewer pipe (25’ below ground) behind the Funderburk’s house somehow got broken and had to be re-routed to work properly. But now these houses sit in their bucolic setting with a wonderful, serene, we all hope, permanent, “beautiful view of the woods.”



The seven ravines of Glencarlyn

RA- VINES?



Anyone who has ridden a bike around Glencarlyn soon learns that this is NOT a level playing field! If you look at our little community east of Carlin Springs

Road, we are a peninsula of land above the brooks on either side (Long Branch on the south and Four Mile Run on the north). The highest spot in our neighborhood is the Burdette house or the library. From this high ground, the land gently slopes to the boundaries and then more precipitously to the brooks.

This gives us character and builds strong bodies (young or old, if you walk the trails). In the summer, before TV and air-conditioning, the kids got out of the hot

houses and into the parks and streets. We spent our time on bikes, running, or building something. We soon learned there were good places and not so good places to build or play. The not so good places had mosquitoes and the occasional rain flow that would wash us out if we built something.

There are seven such places (ravines) around Glencarlyn. Counterclockwise, the first is at the south end of Kensington Street. There is a storm drain at that south end of Kensington St. that allows the rain water free access to the ravine. During dry times, the ravine is still running a constant flow (albeit slow) of water from Moses Ball Spring located at the northeast corner of the Urgent Care Center (or whatever they are calling the complex this week). This nice Moses Ball spring flow provided me with a wonderful place to loiter on the way home from Glencarlyn Elementary (now called Campbell Elementary) and cool my feet in the fresh spring fed stream. Even though the water had traveled a hundred yards or so from the spring, it still was a cold place to build a small dam, watch a salamander or just laze away some time.

The next ravine was (and still is) located behind the houses (5520 and 5524) on 5th Street and runs parallel behind the houses on South Jefferson St. Before the houses (5520 and 5524) were built, this was a place my Aunts never attempted to tame with gardening. It was a lovely marshy wet area all year around. When it rained, the natural soggy area would be augmented with the runoff from 5th St. This ravine runs down to the west side of the Nature Center and can

be seen as you walk into the Center. It was a cool place to play in the summer but the mosquitoes were voracious.

Our ravine, running from just below “the field” at the south end of Illinois St., was, again, always damp but, again, got the wash from the street. Half way to the Long Branch brook, there is a small spring (if you know where to look for it, you can see it from the entrance to the Nature Center). This spring provides a wonderfully cool stream of water year round and became the temporary home for a fish I caught in the Potomac when I was eight and wanted to “save” it. The fish was “saved” for two days and then a raccoon got the fish.

There is a ravine that runs from Illinois Street between the houses on 5th and 4th St. It still does but was put into pipes at its intersection with 5th St in the late 50’s when the Harrison St. Cal De Sac was built. It goes from the ravine at the bottom of 5th St. to an outlet on the other side of the project. When it rained we sometimes put stuff in the water to block the pipe and watch it fill the ravine. Mr. and Mrs. Carlson (the owners of the land) frowned on this activity and soon put an end to our creative fun.

At the bottom of 3rd Street is another run off area. This one is on the side of the park access road and runs strongly when it rains. It, at one time, had a small flow of water from a spring. Not any longer.

The last two ravines are at the north end of Kensington St. and the east end of 2nd St. The 2nd St. part was put into a pipe and it runs down to the park access road (reverted now to a path) and meets the

other (now dry except during storms) run off from the North end of Kensington St. The 2nd St spring used to give a constant cold stream of water which ran its course to the Four Mile Run Stream just above where we used to swim in the summer (al - natural). Four Mile Run stream is relatively cool in the summer but with the addition of the spring water from the ravine, it becomes much more “Zesty.” This was one of the coolest places to swim on a hot summer day. This was also the location of the “Pavilion” next to THE Carlin Springs. The Pavilion was torn down at the end of the 1800’s. The Pavilion was used for a summer retreat by the residents of Washington DC as a place to dance and stay cool from the summer heat of DC. It was serviced by the now gone Glencarlyn rail station (original location around the Route 50 bridge).

Ravines make our community interesting. Like many such geographic formations this topography has provided us with boundaries to our village delineating the park land and inhibiting the expansion of our community. At the creation of the Glencarlyn “development” the land down to the streams was to be used for more housing. This didn’t work out and the park was created instead.

This parkland, as was described in “The Moving house,” had grandfathered stipulations about the use of this land put there by the folks of Glencarlyn when it was given to Virginia and remained in place when Arlington took over the park later.

If you walk our parkland every day (as I did as a young boy) you will learn how interesting and sensible it all is. It will also keep you VERY fit.



CARLIN HALL



VV 5/2012

The first "community center" in Arlington County, Carlin Hall, was erected in 1892 by the lot owners in Glencarlyn who formed the Carlins' Hall Association. It was first named Curtis Hall after the co-founder of Glencarlyn, however, the name evolved over the years into "Carlin Hall." It was used as a church, school, library, dance hall, meeting room and theater.



the Hall on Saturday night, it was OVER at twelve and the room rearranged for the Sunday services.

St. John's Chapel circa 1910, when it was first built.

When the Hall was built, there was no water nor sewer service into the community. A well was hand dug that supplied the Hall for many years. The well was located forty feet from the NW

corner of the building (where the sandbox is now located). The well was discontinued in the 50's. Mr. Hedrick and Mrs. Vertiz (early residents of Glencarlyn) remembered where it had been located and a small hardy group of residents tried to find the old well to supply water to the community garden at the library. We found the pipe from the well to the building in the basement of the Hall. Using modern tracing equipment we followed the pipe to its termination into the well but the well, instead of being just capped, had been filled with dirt.

Glencarlyn's education "system" started first by using homes in Glencarlyn. This was not acceptable. A "New School House" was built in 1906 located at the end of 4th St. The foundation of that school crumbled and was not used after 1916. Finally in 1920 the school operations were brought into the Curtis / Carlin Hall and stayed there until 1953. This was a one room school for grades 1-6.



The "NEW" school house in 1907 (closed in 1916)

1948 Glencarlyn School students at Carlin Hall.

My family went up to the

Glencarlyn Elementary changing to Kenmore in 1955 -'56 Carl Schultz collection



school - Hall to watch my oldest brother, Billy and his multi grade matriculating colleagues, march triumphantly from the old one room school house (Carlin

Hall) to the new Glencarlyn Elementary School, located where the old Kenmore Jr. High School was. The library function was also another use of the building. It was a catch as catch can operation - you had to be there when the hall was open or get someone to open the Hall and help check in or out your book. The Hall served this purpose, from its early years (late 1890's) until the Burdette Library was built in 1923 and opened in 1924. The origi-

nal library was funded by General Burdette and held by the Glencarlyn Community Trust until 1959 when it was officially turned over to Arlington County.

Over the years Carlin Hall has needed repairs, the latest being the exterior painting / refurbishing to be done later this year (2012). The old tin roof was attended to five years ago and SEEMS to be holding for the time being. The cellar (hand dug in 1892) is reflective of the 1890 construction consisting of a “ruble” foundation – a combination of stone and mortar that seems sound enough although it is somewhat moist, low ceilinged (by today’s standards) and doesn’t allow for safe storage of our pancake “griddles” during the long lull between the June Glencarly Day pancake breakfast celebrations.

the last 120 years and, hopefully, will continue to serve in its continuously evolving way.

Sources: Glencarlyn: First 100 Years, Published by Glencarlyn Citizens Association, 1994; * Images of America, Arlington published by Arlington Historical Society, 2000; *Arlington Heritage, Vignettes of a Virginia County, Eleanor Lee Templeman, 1959; *Arlington County in Virginia: A Pictorial History, Nan and Ross Netherton, 1987 (*on loan from Margaret Webb) Village View 12/08; 2/09



Today Carlin Hall still figures prominently in our community’s functions. During nine months of the year it is used by the Glencarlyn Citizen’s Association (GCA) as a meeting place on the first Monday of each month at



7:30pm. These meetings cover a wide variety of topics of interest to the community. It is also used for community parties at Halloween and Christmas, as well as other community picnics and get - togethers.

Jack Turner with helper 12/20/2009 Picture by Pete Olivere

Party at 100 year celebration (1992)



Will Jamieson and mother, Missy at Halloween '08. Gerald Martineau

During the school year the

Hall rings with the sound of children in the morning as the pre-school teaches many children of Arlington.

We have several clubs that meet in the evenings and a very active weekend schedule since the building is able to be rented

for a VERY modest fee through our GCA Membership for parties of all levels of celebration (no adult beverages allowed, please).

The far sighted initial residents of Glencarlyn created a community center that has served our neighborhood admirably over

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN GLEN CARLYN; GLEN REALTY

"We really need more room!"

"OH!"

"Did you say bathroom or kitchen."

"Why?"

"Oh. \$250 to \$500."

"A square foot?!"

After months of planning, trade offs with design, costs, estimates, loans, PER-MITS!!!? The "start" day approaches. Where to put everything during the couple of months needed to do the work? How can

the family function with half the house taken up with THE JOB?

FINALLY! The first day of THE JOB comes and the contractor breaks ground in the backyard! Excitement and anticipation and then.... TILES!?

The inspector comes, looks at the newly unearthed tiles and says, "We really need to look into this. We'll get right on it!"



The last house built by Glen Realty in Glen Carlyn; 5521 3rd St. S.



"Maybe we could swing it this year, honey."

The corollary to "There is no free lunch" is, "There is no inexpensive renovation!"

"Yes, we can do that for \$150."

"Wow! We can afford that!"

"Per square foot."

It's reported and ... the couple of months for THE JOB, MAY turn into the historic geologic find in Northern Virginia which could entail meticulous uncovering of old artifacts by a crack team (not too cognizant of time) sorting through the detritus of bygone ages with small brushes and trowels.

True? Remember where you live. Ask Tim Aiken. The renovation had no sooner begun than it was halted for this startling

(HE might say, “disappointing”) find.

All the interested historic parties were in line for this new find. They would act with promptness but, more importantly to them, thoroughness to get to the bottom of it!

Then Sam Harris stepped forward and shed light on the origin of these historic tiles. They were drainage tiles put in place for the Harris “victory garden” during WW2 which had been located on the three lots adjoining the Harris’ house on 103 Kensington St. S.

A “Thank goodness,” was heard from the Aikens as the historical groups said a somewhat wistful, “Never mind,” and the renovation recommenced.

How did Sam know that these were NOT the suspected artifacts of a bygone era? That these unearthed “ruminants” weren’t the treasured last signs of a lost Indian tribe or early settlement?

Because his dad had built sixty one houses in Glencarlyn between 1948 and 1951 . His dad had a full time job but decided to help the returning veterans and his family by building houses. He restricted himself to Wednesday evenings and Saturdays to do the building. The first three houses were completed (the middle one being Tim’s) in 1948. The victory garden of the war became the three new homes with the “geologically historic” buried drain tiles still in place in the back yard.

The Glen Realty (the name Sam’s dad created) houses were built with brick, creating small but strong affordable housing in our community. His schedule allowed him

to still work full time and still complete the houses. His last house was built for his wife on 5521 Third St. South, taking up two lots and with a far bigger square footage than any of the other houses he had built in the community.

If a brick house was built in Glencarlyn between the years of 1948 and 1951, it was probably a project done by Sam Harris’ father. They are a strong lasting testament (and good basis for renovations) to a good builder in our early neighborhood.

If you DO find artifacts during a renovation, remember, this area was used extensively for farming for many years, not to mention the victory gardens. Never discount the obvious when seeking an explanation.

THE ARMED VILLAGE!



Glencarlyn has always been a quiet bucolic setting. After the Civil war (when we did have northern troops stationed in and around the area) there was little need for major



Yes! We really had one in the village!

or minor weaponry. We had some hunters in the community, but aside from the park service feeling the need to reduce the squirrel population with the use of a sharpshooter in the '70's, there have been very few instances of the use of firearms here.

Our family didn't have guns. That didn't mean we weren't able to 'shoot' something but we used more primitive weapons. We started with hand thrown materials including rocks and snowballs. When my brothers and I (and our friends) turned short of teen years, we used bb guns around our property. My dad was never impressed with our aim when we took out the windows of the garage over the course of a month from a 'fort' we had built in the woods. This, and another shoot out with Ken, Bill, Cecil, Charlie and Frank which led to the puncturing of a neighbors picture window (\$75) caused our three bb guns to be confiscated by our parents and disposed piecemeal into the trash over the period of a month.

We also had sling shots – some hand made out of curtain rod tubes with old inner tubes to produce persimmon launchers. Some folks like persimmons. At velocity, particularly when they are ripe and juicy, they seldom are appreciated by the recipients. In persimmon season, we had a ball!

Bows? Sure the Indians that were here had them. We had a 30 and a 50 lb. bow. We set up bows in the front lawn and got pretty good at using them.

There was a summer when I became immersed with knife throwing and got two 'throwing knives' from a local store. These were very cheap (cheaply balanced") pieces of steel with some leather wrapped around one end. The trees in the yard took a beating over the course of a month at which point it became clear there was a need for more to this than just throwing the knives and I signed up the program and the knives.

Now as for the rest of the neighbors. There were some hunters and they did get game outside of the village. Ken's dad, Charlie's dad and Jay's family and a few others had high powered guns for hunting. Ken's dad also had a twenty two he used with rat shot. His aim was to stop folks from "soaping" his car on Halloween. Word got out and no-one was hurt (nor was his car "soaped").

Henry Jarboe, who lived to the east of us, demonstrated his prowess with a rifle by bringing home a 'fresh' deer and stringing it up from a tree in front of his house and 'dressing' it there. "Dressing" a deer does not consist of making a fashion statement! It DID consist of all sorts of things that got my parents upset. Henry didn't mind. "There ain't no law against it!"

Henry also decided one evening that an owl that hooted all night was not to his liking and did some 'sonic' shooting at dusk. We were out on the screened in porch in the summer eating dinner when we heard Henry come out back with a shotgun. The owl had commenced its evening serenade. It was lovely interspersed with the wood thrush. Henry enjoyed a few drinks in the evening and we could hear him giving verbal vent at the

owls' hooting. This was followed by a very loud "BOOM!" as he discharged the shotgun in the general direction of the owl. Two more shots followed and the owl took flight to another more receptive audience.

Mrs. Hickman, "the bird lady" living in the house that is now the nature center also had problems with trespassers. The family owned ten acres around the house and didn't like folks just walking onto their property. First she strung barbed wire around the entire perimeter of the land (with signs posting the property). Then she got a twenty two and would let fly in the general direction of folks that didn't understand the significance of the wire and signs. When I'd use our back path into the woods, I would always wave at the house (just in case) before scooting under the barbed wire to go for a walk.

What about that machine gun? Just to get your attention? Sure. But it existed. It had a home in the basement window on 4th Street. You couldn't see it from anywhere but in the basement. I asked the owner's son what it was doing there (it was set up with the belt in place and ready for use).

The son said his dad thought we might have some trouble with the 'commies' and he was ready! Evidently he had 'liberated' this somehow at the end of the war and there it was in his basement, ready for use.

During all my years in Glencarlyn, no one has ever been hurt with a gun – except for the time when we had the bb gun fight (the picture window).

After Pearl Harbor Japan did not invade the mainland US. This has been argued as probably an impossibility due to many factors including distance etc. However there is this quote from Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto - **"You cannot invade the mainland United States. There would be a rifle behind each blade of grass."**

I'm not sure how prevalent the major arms of our neighbor on 4th St. were throughout the US,

but it seems there was some validity in the Admiral's statement



medical facility close to the neighborhood COULD be seen as a good thing. The sirens and attendant traffic not to mention the light spill from the parking lots, the overflow traffic on the



Overhead shot and front entrance of ?



THE HOSPITAL

Dad looked over my shoulder as I was squatted down over my bicycle busily oiling the chain and anything else that might need a good shot of lubricant.

"Where did you get the syringe?"

"We found them behind Doctor's hospital. There's a whole bunch on them that weren't burned and they make great oilers for the bike."

"I see. Please be careful with that." And Dad went inside.

That started the next phase in Glencarlyn's symbiotic relationship with this new institution overlooking Carlin Springs Road. The GCA immediately contacted the hospital and the practice of burning the "sharps" behind the hospital ceased. No more oilers!

The hospital was born out of a combination of ambition on the part of some doctors, Arlington's help in procuring the land and the zoning rights and the movement of one house and the destruction of another two houses.

The internal county workings can only be guessed at now. As far as Glencarlyn was concerned, it was always a mixed blessing. Having a

community streets and employees cutting through the neighborhood were NOT seen in a favorable light.

The Stetson houses (there were two located on the land now used by the facility) were torn down (the larger one) and moved (the smaller one). The Schultz's property and house (behind the facility) was negotiated with (after Carl Schultz died) to give the land needed for the full sized property (the house was destroyed). The Ball Seller's Spring, located on the northeast side of the facility) was preserved (and can be still visited today).

Mrs. Stetson's house (then owned by the facility) was moved from the top of the hill to a location by the stream (the present location of the medical facility) and used by residents of the hospital as housing for awhile. When it no longer met the facility's needs, the hospital board ordered it destroyed. Mrs. Stetson stepped in and got the house with the provision it be moved. It was (through the hospitals parking lot) into its present position across from the library (please see "**The Moving House**" P.45).

A fence was finally put up between the neighborhood and the facility which stopped the employees from parking in the neighborhood (except 5th Rd. S. which still gets its share of parking problems).

The lighting was adjusted to decrease the

“spill” and trees planted along the fence to augment the adjustments.

Then the hospital negotiated to move to Loudon County. Again, there were a lot of zoning problems associated with going into Loudon but they eventually were overcome. The grounds and building are still here and have been used for a variety of activities since then. The latest has been the county’s insistence that there be an “urgent care” center in south Arlington. The original center was located in Crystal City across from the Costco warehouse. This was closed down due to the new construction of business and apartment buildings in that area. The builder was willing to build to the clinics’ specifications on one floor of a new building. The county board rejected that offer for zoning reasons and asked Arlington Hospital, as part of a deal to expand that facility (the new Virginia Hospital Center) to open the urgent care center “somewhere in south Arlington.”

The old Doctor’s Hospital Center (then vacant) was a “perfect alternative,” regardless of its location on the border of Fairfax (instead of in the middle of the county in Crystal City). This new facility is for “walk in’s” with no Emergency Care options (no sirens or rushing ambulances). The Virginia Hospital center is also using it for “day care” for the children of employees of the center with a shuttle available (easing parking problems at the Hospital Center – shifting it to our facility).

The facility is a sprawling one floor building with serene open views of the park and usually bright and sunny inside (many windows). As such, it is probably expensive to maintain and costly to heat and cool. Only a small portion of its usable space is being used at this time. What’s next for the large facility?

TWELFTH NIGHT



Mother walked through the living room past the Christmas tree and paused to look at the yellow brown needles that had fallen on the floor.

“Bill?”

“Yes?” From the kitchen.

“Don’t you think it’s time for the tree to go?”

Alan and I, sitting in the living room studiously reviewing the Sunday comics, heard the heavy step of dad coming down the hall.

“Hmmm.” We looked up. Dad was looking at the fallen pine needles the Christmas lights and ornaments running haphazardly through the now scraggly looking tree.

“You’re probably right.”

When you live in an old wooden house with seasoned wood over sixty years old, you take fire seriously. A bad light fixture, overheated bulbs – who could tell.

“Maybe today?”

“Yes. This afternoon. What do you say, boys?”

“Sure!” Me thinking of where the tree was headed.

“Ok” Alan, less enthusiastic.

Billy, my older brother, was upstairs, “doing homework.”

The long strings of lights were taken off the tree and shoved in the Christmas boxes to be untangled next year by Billy. The tree was unceremoniously pulled out of the living room leaving a trail of needles across the floor and a great number where the stiff limbs rubbed the needles off on either side of the doorway. Outside the tree holder was pulled off, with the combination of sap

and a little wetness still in the bottom.

Christmas was now officially over at our house. The toys (for me, a pair of Hopalong Cassidy cap pistols) were now a known part of the repertoire of play things. I had practiced my “fast draw” on the back lawn. I was getting faster in the frosty air when I decided to fire a cap after a real fast draw. The hammer on the gun hit the cap. The cap exploded and the hammer broke off! I had one “functional” cap pistol now and another for show. “BANG BANG!” If you said it loud enough it was as noisy as the cap.

Dad pulled the car out of our side of the garage (the aunties green Dodge parked on their side) and up the driveway to the bare crab apple tree, the closest place to the house.

I pulled the Christmas tree across the cold lawn, watching the trail of needles stretch out behind me. Dad hoisted the tree on top and tied it down. This was a loose arrangement since we didn’t have far to go.

We drove up Fifth Street past two new houses being built and crossed the two lane Carlyn Springs Rd and on to the field beside Glencarlyn Elementary located across from Hamilton’s store (now the 7-11). We looked at the burgeoning pile of dry trees before us. There must have been at least fifty people there before us – fifty dry trees, some drier than ours, piled together in the middle of the field. Dad untied our tree and slid it off the top of the car. I pulled it over to the side of the pile and he lifted it up and gave it a boost on top of the other trees.

“How many trees will there be?”

“Well, David, there are over three hundred families in Glencarlyn. Some, like your aunts, don’t get trees ‘cause they don’t have family. But there will be a bunch for the Twelfth Night celebration.

“What’s the ‘Twelfth night’?”

“Old English custom, I guess. Takes place 12 days after Christmas – January 5th or 6th. It’s the official end of Christmas and is supposed to be a party.”

“So we burn the Christmas trees?”

"It's a good end to the season and it's fun. The county won't pick them up so...."

As we stood and looked, Mr. Stoneburner (from First Street) drove up.

"Hi!"

"Hi! Looks like it's going to be better than last year."

"So far we are right on track."

Mr. Stoneburner didn't just hoist the tree up as dad had done but got a twist to sling it higher and his tree landed on top of ours.

"I'll see you then."

"Bye."

"He really got that tree up there!"

"Aw, Dad. His tree was smaller!"

"Hahahaha! Thanks, David."

As we began to get into the car, Mr. McGuire* pulled up.

"Can we help, Jim?"

"That would be nice, Bill."

"There." Another boosted tree went on top of the first layer.

"Thanks, Bill. Nice seeing you, David."

"Nice seeing you, sir."

He hadn't gotten out of the car. As we left I asked dad, "What happened to his legs, dad?"

"He has polio. Started to get worse last year."

The days passed. When it finally got to be "the night" we took the long cold walk up to the field. There had to be at least a hundred and fifty folks standing in a circle around a huge pile of old Christmas trees.

We heard someone yell a Twelfth Night greeting and a few words were said. A torch was touched to several points around the pile and the flames began to take hold.

There must have been some kerosene or something on the pile because the flames

seemed to grab hold of the lower trees and then spread upward very quickly.

"We'd better move back, kids." Dad took Mom's hand and we all stepped back as the flames took over the entire pile and the smoke rose and the heat became intense. We kept moving back as the fire raged and the heat grew and grew against our bare faces. I touched my coat sleeve and it was hot! I turned around and looked at Carlin Springs Road. The traffic was stopped as people pulled over and watched this mammoth bonfire grow and grow.

The traffic on Route 50 slowed and some cars were seen turning into the neighborhood on Lexington Street to circle around and watch. An Arlington fire truck was parked along Carlin Springs Road, just in case something got out of hand.

There had been no discernable wind when the fire began but, as the tempest grew, the fire sucked air to fuel the flames and there was a cold breeze against our backs.

The fire rose, the flames were at least a hundred feet into the air. It roared and the radiating heat had us at least a hundred feet away and it was still very hot! Everyone was focused on the fire.

It took a half hour for the fire to simmer down. I can't remember if there were any refreshments afterward; everything else that evening was overshadowed by the enormity of the wonderful bonfire.

What a way to end the season!

*Mrs. McGuire is the artist who painted the picture of the old library located in the Glencarlyn Library today.

THE MUSIC MAN OF GLEN-CARLYN



Summer in Glencarlynn in the 50's was always an idyllic time. The trees were

and it was a popular place to play a fast game of tennis. Fast because playing on a dirt court meant you had to move fast because the ball didn't bounce as high or go as far after it hit the dirt court. And if the court hadn't been rolled in several weeks, the ball could hit a bad spot and go wherever it wanted to go. The roller was al-

ways parked over at my aunts' house for whoever wanted to take the 100+ pound steel roller to the court and push it over the rough court surface. A good game of tennis on that court was



Vv 2/2008

Mr. Adler's magic—1950's

green and lush and the summer heat was not as intense as it was in Washington. The haze of the summer humidity would show in the morning when the sun first hit the dew – covered grass and in the evening when the spectacular orange and red wispy clouds drifted away from the violet sunsets.

Summer vacation was a time to enjoy the heat and build forts in the woods and dams in the streams to hold back the water so we could swim and stay cool. If it was a lousy dam, we could just lie in the water and cool off.

There was a dirt tennis court on the northwest corner of 5th and Illinois Streets

fast but it could take a long time!

Summer evenings were a time of cooling temperatures, open windows, and sitting on porches. Radios played good music and some stories. Television was in its infancy. There were three TVs in the entire neighborhood. We didn't have one. If you had a good antennae on your TV, you could pick up one or two stations – all in black and white.

On those quiet humid summer evenings, one of the pleasant events was to listen to the wonderful piano music being played at my aunts' house at the corner of 5th and Illinois St. No one had air conditioning so the sound would come from the front

room of their home and drift in the evening air to all the neighbors.

The man behind the music was Mr. Adler. He and his wife lived in the house on the southeast corner of 3rd and Illinois. He was a wonderful man with gray hair and was always impeccably dressed in a three – piece suit, even in the hottest weather. He wore a hat (not wide brimmed, but very dashing for Glencarlyn). Sometime after seven o'clock in the sunlit evening, Mr. Adler would walk down Illinois Street, silver – tipped walking cane in hand, to go to my Aunt Constance and Aunt Hadassah's house to play their grand piano.

He had a jaunty walk, a sparkle in his eye, and was one of the children's favorite people. He could do magic tricks! We children would bike or walk with him from his house down to my aunt's house.

Mr. Adler could twirl his cane, even toss into the air and catch it with seeming ease. Another of his tricks consisted of his ability to make a coin appear from anywhere. He pulled one out of my ear one evening. I felt, since it obviously came from me, it should be mine. He said "finders keepers," and slipped the coin into his pocket with a mischievous twinkle in his eye. He could roll the coin through his fingers, starting at his index finger and go all the way to his little finger and back! I spent a lot of time picking up coins while trying to do this trick at home!

When Mr. Adler mounted the steps to my Aunt's house, we knew the games and magic tricks for children were over for the evening. The real magic was about to be-

gin.

My aunts would greet him at the screen door and ask him in. It seemed all very formal to me, but it was the proper way to greet a visitor in those days.

They would sit and talk in the living room for a few minutes, then my aunts would stay seated and Mr. Adler would go to the piano by the front windows.

Then the real magic would begin. Mr. Adler would sit down at the piano and all that dexterity of his fingers that made coins appear or roll across his fingers would make the old piano young with the sound of the great composers. He often played from loving memory and his renditions of the classics were played with a passion – a love you could hear in every key stroke. We felt the music as well as heard it.

As the sun turned the western skyline the glorious multiple shades of color, the sounds of Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, and many other composers came alive at Mr. Adler's magic touch. Our family would sit on our screened – in back porch finishing dinner and listen to the wonderful music as the summer evening slowly wound down to the quiet cooler summer night.

Nothing
taste better!



Nothing more
discouraging



VARMINTS IN THE GARDEN

Tomatoes! Wonderful, fresh, home grown tomatoes. Just as is, or on a couple of slices of bread with mayonnaise or add ... WHATEVER, tomatoes are GREAT!

My great aunts had gardens of every sort of vegetable and some strawberries

and raspberries. Mrs. Talley, at 5829 5th St. S. (one house in from Carlin Springs Rd) sold a wonderful assortment of delicious tomatoes in season to anyone who loved tomatoes. It was a double treat because, Eloise, her lovely daughter, would sometimes help in the sales. These gorgeous tomatoes went for ten to fifty cents each. This was back when you could feed a family of five for around thirty dollars a week (if you didn't buy Spanish Bar Cake).

The Reeves had a farm which existed from the 1870's to the 1950's consisting of 160 acres from Bluemont Junction to the Fairfax line (beyond Carlyn Springs Elementary School); from Carlin Springs Rd. to Seven Corners. They sold this land to developers and Arlington County in the '50's. One of Nelson Reeves favorite summer snacks was tomato slices with mayonnaise between two slices of white bread.

They all had problems with varmints. What's the difference between a "Varmint" and a "Critter?" Critters are cute, usually furry, and scamper around amusing us. Varmints, on the other hand, eat tomatoes!

The gardens of yesteryear had problems with rabbits and turtles and the occasional deer or raccoon or possum. These varmints were restrained by fences or became a treat for the local armed farmers or, my neighbor, Henry Jarboe. The farmers were in a symbiotic relationship with the varmints. The varmints ate the crops, the farmers ate the varmints! Well, not the turtles, seldom the possums (not tasty at ALL) and the raccoons soon figured out the boundaries.

The first year I tried a garden, after all these years, I planted the wonderful tomatoes, squash and beans (limited crops for an 8' X 4' area) and all was going well. No need for a fence (just like Aunt Hadassah and her garden back in the '50's), just let it grow! The little green tomatoes looked SOOOO good! They got bigger and then Bambi, a lovely soft adorable critter, and her darling fawn came up and ate the tomatoes, the beans and the squash leaves and trampled the rest of the garden.

VARMINTS! I went to Home Depot and got some "deer fence" (a light gauzy plastic net six feet tall) and some six foot steel poles and surrounded the garden. Believe it or not, that stopped the deer! We got a bumper crop of six tomatoes that year. No squash and two hands full of beans.

The next year, the "deer fence" went up first and the garden went in next. No problem with varmint deer!

Squirrel critters. They turned out to love tomatoes. VARMINTS! I talked to an old friend, Tony, and he related how his grandfather had a problem with a neighbor's dog who liked to pee on his grandfather's fig bush in the '50's. His grandfather set up a short piece of wire screen on the ground and one on the fig bush and connected the wire to house current. The dog came up and ... Tony said he figures that dog is still running!

The problem was to figure out which tomato was the next victim. A random guess or two and finally ... The day after, the fence was half torn down and THAT squirrel permanently lost its appetite for to-

matoes.

A baby rabbit took refuge behind the deer fence from the foxes. Maxine, my loving wife (and I) thought this to be SOOO cute! He grew safely behind the fence and then one day he decided to take off the top of my marigolds (put there to stop the deer). Hmmm. A small price to pay for such a cute critter.

Then he took up munching on the tomatoes and beans. VARMINT! I patched the fence with the cute bunny on the outside. Another bumper crop of six tomatoes and a couple of hands full of wonderful beans but, again no squash.

With the fence in place, the one electric wire inside the deer fence (in standby) and the new garden with fertilizer, we were ready! This was our year to have the vegetable cornucopia of our dreams! No rabbits, no deer, no squirrels and clear sailing to nutritious delicious vegetables.

The beans grew up the deer fence and the deer came by and ate the vines clinging to the outside of the fence! The squirrels had made little (untrained) babies who got into the garden. Then there were chipmunks. Cute critters that turned into varmints! The neighbor's cat took out about eleven of them but they were very ... uhhh ... busy. I've never seen so many baby chipmunks!

The wire was the only answer. I picked one of the tomatoes that already had been sampled and attached the wire. At breakfast the next morning, I watched a cute little chipmunk varmint climb up to the

tomatoes, take one bite and literally step back two paces, take a look and try a second bite. The second zap convinced him. He took off like a rocket! A new NON – tomato eating chipmunk was born!

The last try to protect the garden was a proposed small electrified fence inside my deer fence. This was going to be powered with a transformer, one of those little ones used to recharge a phone. No real power but plenty of spark, I hoped. After I sorta re-configured it, I plugged it in and instantly ... had a dead charger. How can you tell if a charger is dead? When the thing makes a funny noise and smoke comes out.

I'm sure there's a solution to these problems. My friends now tell me cayenne pepper stops squirrels and birds and deer. It's worth a try.

My aunt Hadassah lived for years off the wonderful produce of her garden (and shared the bounty with us) and the Reeves made a living with their dairy farm and the Talley's got extra money for their delicious tomatoes. Someday I'll figure out how to break even on all the work and the cost of seed and plants and water and fencing. But, one thing you can say about gardening, it's rewarding in all its minor and major glories and there is nothing better tasting than a fresh, home grown tomato. Ask any of our local varmints!



Mom and Dad help as David prepares for the Glencarlyn parade around Glencarlyn Elementary school. David is the "Flying Purple People Eater" OBVIOUSLY!



PANCAKES IN THE PARK (2013)

The pancake flipped perfectly and the bubbled side was now the cooking side and the golden brown side looked perfect. The line was sporadic, but then it WAS 8:30am Saturday, the first day of June and folks might like to sleep in.

Captain Bret Butler had taken over for Jim Moser flipping the pancakes with ease and having fun. Whether it was Captain Butler's infectious joi d'veie and authoritative stance with a spatula or his body armor and side arm, the negative culinary revelations seem to perceptibly decrease. Jim Moser said he had a soccer or baseball game to attend with Aiden or Rachell. He brought Carly, his lovely wife, to prove it.

I looked up to the trestle over the Four Mile Run stream and watched a runner go by (walking). When this event started back in the mid 1950's, no -one ran on the rail lines. The "sleepers" were too close or too far to run on and there WAS the occasional train to consider.

A perfect day. We've had some Glencarlyn days overcast, some rainy, some cold and miser-

able but throughout the history of Glencarlyn Day Festivities, the neighbors come. The food is a draw but moreover, it's the people of our community – a time to rejoice the coming of warm, long lazy days, vacations and children out of school. This is a time to catch up and see each other again.

This was the culmination of months of preparation. Brian Cavey (President of the GCA, 2013) had worked hard, but, as I looked around, Pete Oliver came out of the back room of the shelter. He had been mixing batter for the pancakes and wanted an update on the viscosity; was it too thick or too thin? This was the man who was orchestrating so much of what goes on in Glencarlyn today. He had been up late (as had Brian and Sam Celia with the music) making it happen for a neighborhood that enjoyed the fun, perhaps not realizing the work involved to make it look easy. There are now permits to be gotten (and paid for!), griddles to be moved (100 lbs each), people to be organized, food to be bought and a host of other details that, if all goes smoothly, which it USUALLY does, are not noticed by the neighborhood. The neighborhood is blessed with such tireless volunteers – and takes it, too often, for granted. I said a quiet "thank you," fully understanding what happens when it DOES-N'T go smoothly.

NUTS! The griddle was too hot. The pancakes on one side of the grill were burning and the other side were taking too long (each side of the griddle can be independently adjusted). These 100 lb. grills were professional and heavy. Capt. Shepherd, who had directed their purchase many years before, used to come down, early on Saturday morning to monitor their installation. He had typed up a list of instructions, at least one page long, to describe each phase and final inspection. I'm not sure, but I think we have misplaced those directions. I looked behind me at the large poster board sign that someone had printed – "The John Shepherd memorial pancake station."

This tradition, in a somewhat non traditional neighborhood, had started back in the 50's. My earliest recollections were of a group getting together in the old park, setting up Coleman stoves

with griddles on top and cooking pancakes. My dad flipped pancakes in his day, alternating the cooking with the pumping up the Coleman Stove's gas fired apparatus.

This relatively new celebration and location were made possible by the addition of roads through the park in the early 50's which had, heretofore, been only accessible by foot. The location has changed from the old "shelter," erected in the mid fifties, at the end of 4th Street, to the one which we now use (with the blessed addition of bathrooms).

The Carlsons, a linchpin in the community for many years (since 1961 or '62), lived at the top of the hill on Harrison St. Mr. and Mrs. Carlson would make coffee and mix batter for the proceedings in the park (since there was no power at the old shelter).

On the first Saturday of June, Pete Daniels in his model "T" Ford would troll the streets at 7am, toting his "AAAAOOOOGAAA!" horn to announce the breakfast. After Pete no longer did the honors, Capt. Shepherd led off with his model "A" Ford – I think he bought Pete's horn.

This was the "official signal" and the neighbors would gather in small knots on the streets, pushing strollers (always an exciting ride to this day for the youngsters in the prams), down the steep park road and happily meeting neighbors after the long winter hibernation and go to the sumptuous repast in the park.

When the festivities moved to the now "Pancake Park" in the 70's, my mother would set up her stage and entertain children of all ages with an appropriate puppet show. This usually rowdy but wholesome extravaganza (the puppet show) lasted for several years until age and arthritis slowed down the intrepid entertainer (my mom).

The parade. Ah! We were more creative then.

I remember my mother making a "flying purple people eater" costume for me. For those who think this has something to do with Smerfs, it didn't. There was a popular tune that year by the same name and mom made the uniform, dad set up some kind of music producing gizmo and I was the fellow in the hot, claustrophobic, olfactory challenged costume which paraded around the "new" Glencarlyn Elementary school (Where Kenmore was, close to where Kenmore Never mind!)

Darn griddle! Nice and brown on one side of the pancake and slightly burnt on the other side. What to do? The line is getting longer. Hmmm. Serve it "brown side up." As my mom said "Charcoal is good for you." This didn't speak well of her culinary endeavors. She was mostly great but there WERE times when

Pete comes over and reminds me that it's



Judd's turn to entertain and cook. I give up the tall white hat and the apron reluctantly. I love a captive audience!

As I come out of the park, headed home to do the morning's "Honey – does" and get ready to watch the parade, I see groups of people headed for the park, some pushing prams, some just strolling in the beautiful June morning sun with the slight perfume of honeysuckle, primrose and mock orange. What a day! Perfect! What a crowd all meaning to the park to beat the 10am deadline! I breath a sigh of relief. Good luck, Judd.

You're home!



Modified street sign for some of our less considerate neighbors

Slow Down!

We are blessed by living in a community that is land locked. When you come into our community, it's not a through way to anywhere else. This is unique in Arlington County where everything seems to be a

shortcut to somewhere else.

In short, "We have the met the enemy (Pogo saying – Google it!) and they are us." Most of us moved here because it was a small bucolic area in the midst of the mad rush of the Washington area. In seven years, just in our two block area of Glencarlyn we have gone from no children to over 15 (and soon to grow to 17) under the age of twelve. Not only have the children arrived but so have the proliferation of "Slow, Children at play" or the now ubiquitous green plastic kids reminding us of children nearby.

This, in turn, has led to the sidewalk request. Have you noticed that the kids (dog walkers, runners, bicyclist etc.) still prefer the streets? When you're home, treat it like home! At home you're safe. Keep it safe by keeping the speed down. As one neighbor said, "If someone hits my kid it will be the second to last face they see in this lifetime!" If we have trouble with visitors (to the Kenmore / Carlynn Springs' School or the Glencarlyn Park), we can ask the police for some help. Most of our speeders live here. Remember, you're home, slow down!



How do they make so much "Noise?"



PEEPERS

(spring 2013)

Not all memories are from the distant past. Some are from now and are all the better for it.

The marshmallow went from its relatively small white size to double and slowly turned brown as I rotated the long handled fork over the wood fire in the metal enclosure. THIS is the way a marshmallow is supposed to look when you make a smore! Audrey popped a marshmallow on her fork and lit it like a candle and watched as the white delicacy swelled a little and turned black as the fire consumed it. Smores with carbon. Not for everyone.

The March evening was, as the Irish say, soft. The trees hadn't started to bud yet. The fire's smoke rose straight up so we could all come in close and make the summer treats. Mine was perfect. Carly asked if I was ready for the graham cracker. Almost! Then the beautiful tanned perfection lost its shape, drooped to one tine, and before I could rescue it, plopped into the wood coals. Rick laughed, Carly put the cracker away and Jim put

another stick in the fire.

Smores and beer. Ahhhh! Just like Boy Scouts, without the beer, of course. Well, the kids didn't get the beer now either. They were playing flashlight tag in the field or beating the tether ball to death, or just enjoying the wonderful warm March evening. Dillon rested in the most comfortable seat around the fire, in Carl's (her Dad) lap.

The sun had set and the evening moved comfortably over us. Then the western horizon blazed with a new light. Audrey made a call and ascertained that Anthony had thrown a large dry limb on a fire get together behind a house on Jefferson St. and they were dampening it down with a garden hose as she talked.

"Well, it's time!" Said Jim, the organizer of the smore / beer / peeper extravaganza (with Carly's help, no doubt). He was being prompted by Rachel and Aiden (their children) who had come up to the fire and reminded Jim of the evening's itinerary. The wire mesh grid was placed over the fire, beers were finished and we began to get ready for the great safari into the wilds.

Carl opened a small bag and took out the "head lamps." These are LED flashlights that attach to the head via elastic straps. Dillon looked up at me with hers on and the world became a white ball of light.

"Don't do that!" Said Carl.

"Sorry."

"This way!" And Jim led the way to the great adventure.

The caravan of bouncing headlamps headed over the newly mowed field to the path leading down to the Nature Center and the early spring cacophony produced by the peepers, all the males singing loudly to attract the females. We were barely on our way when all the kids rushed past us slow pokes – they knew the way.

Soon the line stretched out along the dark tree covered path down the hill with bobbing headlamps

and the joyful sound of children having fun. We all were, but they were much more vocally appreciative. I know the rest of us thought it was fun but were trying to remain “cool.”

The first pond in front of the Nature Center was a noisome center of peepers until the kids got there. Silence reined! We peered over the railing into the dark pool of cold water in search of the small frogs (1.5” in length) with no success. This might turn out to be a snipe hunt.

We were all peering over different parts of the



The OTHER POND on the way in to the Nature Center

railing. “Shhhhhhh!” Finally a loud questioning “peep!” We slowly moved over to the location – NOTHING!

“Let’s try the other pond.” Jim or Carl.

We dutifully trooped down the entrance road to the Nature Center to the pond ‘on the way in.’ This pond has no fencing or railing. The pond is fed from the Ball Sellers’ Spring on the Hospital property. It’s surrounded by nature’s finest protection – mud. Again the raucous sounds of happy amorous peepers died to silence as we approached. The children (and adults) soon surrounded the pool (in the mud) and waited. And waited. Then a plaintive peep. Then an answering peep. Horny little devils! Then nothing.

Carl spotted a peeper in the cold springtime water and scooped it up in his hand. This little guy looked at us from the warmth of Carl’s hand. He looked at us and we crowded around Carl and looked at him. WOW! So small! Yet we can hear his (their) voices a quarter mile away!

Carl carefully put the peeper back in the water. “Can you get another one, daddy?” Who could say ‘no’ to Dillon?

Carl scouted the pond and saw another one and scooped it up carefully. Again, he and we looked eye to frog eye. The second peeper went back in the water, probably warmer for being in Carl’s hand.

Then it started! The word that we were friendly (and warm) must have gotten around the pond quickly because the peepers all started to yell their butts off! A peeper produces a sound at about 95 decibels. That’s why they are very audible at a goodly distance!



Actual photo taken on peeper hunt, 2013. This one’s name is ‘Ralph.

Picture taken by Jim or Carly Moser. Name of peeper from Lilly or Rachel.’

Quite literally, it was too loud to stay close to the pond. We all beat a hasty retreat, away from this piercing cacophony.

As the bobbing headlamps spread out on the trail back to more smores and the fire, we could hear the peepers behind us in full throat announcing the coming of spring in Glencarlyn.

THE SCHOOL AT THE END OF THE ROAD.



In the early 1900's we finally got a school house built in Glencarlyn. It was large, by those day's standards, and had all that was required to be a good school; teachers, students and a building where they could get together and learn the basics of math, reading and history.

This edifice of learning was located at the bottom of 4th Street on Harrison St., about 25 feet north of the present "Glencarlyn Park" sign. There are still some pieces of the original foundation there for the more adventuresome to find.

This building was in the woods at the bottom of a street with few houses on it. The neighborhood was happy to have the school but unhappy about the location. When it was found to



Glencarlyn's first schoolhouse is shown here as depicted in Crandal Mackey's A Brief History of Alexandria County, Virginia, 1907. Courtesy of Arlington County Public Library

The 1907 school house at the end of 4th St. S. have a faulty foundation, the building was abandoned in the early 1920's and taken apart by a group of Glencarlyn boys directed by Catlett Davis. He formed this group and called it The Glencarlyn Athletic Association and its purpose was to have a good group of boys (early Boy Scouts) and create a



Carl Shulze takes over the "Athletic Assoc." Building.

new club house using the materials from the old school house. The club house was to be erected on the southwest corner of 4th and Lexington Street.

The educational process, on the other hand, moved to Carlyn Hall where it remained until the 50's when the new Glencarlyn Elementary school was erected across Carlyn Springs Road on the land bought from Nelson Reeves the head of a farming family since the 1870's. The "club house project" lasted until 1925 when it was finally aban-



Clubhouse on the southwest corner of Fourth and Lexington Streets

The boarded up 'apartment building'

doned and the partially completed "clubhouse" and property were sold to Carl Schulze.

When I was growing up, the old austere brick structure which Carl Schulze had transformed into an apartment building sat on the southwest corner of 4th and Lexington waiting for a zoning change. He said he developed the house originally for himself, his wife and his mother in law to live in but, when his mother in law died, he converted the house into an apartment building.

The county would not budge. This was to be a zoned 6 residential neighborhood and with the exception of two stores that had sprouted up in the early years, that's what we were going to stay!

Carl Schulze fought an ongoing battle with the county for many causes. These included his half finished house in the woods (gone now but the site is behind the hospital / emergency clinic / day care center), his house on the corner of 1st and Carlyn Springs Road, and his "apartment building" in Glencarlyn.

The house at 1st and Carlyn Springs Road was his main residence. He and his wife lived there for many years and Carl had a photo studio in the outer part of the house (the wrap around porch) with processing being done in the basement and the back room of the first floor. The county wanted him to paint the house. The house is covered with Cyprus wood which is, by its nature, not needing paint to remain viable. The county didn't like the looks of the unpainted house, but in the county ordinances it says the wood either needs to be painted OR be naturally resistant to deterioration. Cyprus wood is naturally resistant to deterioration. He continued to win that battle.

The house in the woods, after his wife died, slowly deteriorated and the county pushed him to sell to the doctor's hospital. He did finally sell to the hospital. When the hospital got the property they immediately bull dozed the house to the ground.

His converted "club house" (his would be apartment building) was the last sore point the county had a problem with. The county tried several different means to get the place leveled but Carl was well within his rights. The county said it was derelict, but it really was maintained. Then

they tried to say it was a property that could be a haven for undesirables. Carl boarded the doors and windows (as seen), put a high fence around it and it became impregnable (we thought).

There the house stood, across from St. John's Church for many years. The county wouldn't let Carl open the house for occupancy as an apartment building and Carl wouldn't sell it.

Finally, one evening someone torched the house from the inside and Carl did sell to a developer who put in three very nice, appropriate to the community houses on the property.

Thus ended the tale of the school house built at the end of a lonely road in Glencarlyn,



The 'new' houses on 4th and Lexington St. S.

transported board by board for a community club house which became a sore point for the county government and a true oddity in our community.



Trafalgar Square 1965

SUMMER VACATIONS/ JOB ON THE CONTINENT



Stoop labor. But it's in Tiptree, England. I look down at the never ending row of strawberries before me. I'd tried bending over, crawling on my knees, or squatting. Each worked for a little while. I looked over the field to where my international colleagues pursued the same chore.

We were Americans, Danish, Yugoslavians, Swedes, Germans and others. We were doing jobs in England that the English would not do (the same rules apply now as then).

The Yugoslavians were the fastest. At break, where we were served warm milky sweet

tea, one of them had held up a dollar and said "Does this dollar speak?" He said this derisively, sarcastically. The rest of us knew better than to get into an ideological argument at break. Waste of energy. We also knew that these same folks, ideologically sarcastic about the capitalist system, worked harder than anyone else out there because they got to spend money where the shelves weren't empty and they could take their loot back to their communist country.

I looked up at the cloudy sky. England! Mostly cold and wet so far. No crickets at night. The wheat field next to the Quonset hut we slept in (one for men another for women) was high with summer wheat except where a few folks had pressed it down with someone making whoopee in 'private.'

A quarter mile walk to the pub and a glass of Bulmer's Woodpecker cider. Ummm.

How did I get here? Nineteen hours in an Icelandic turboprop airline. We ground our way across the cold Atlantic, it looking like a never ending ex-

panse of Neugahide. There was a brief stop in a desolate cold windswept airport in Iceland. If first prize was a day at that airport, second prize would be two days. The trip was fun, it was boring, it was exhilarating watching the sun rise in the east flying at 28,000 feet, feeling tired and needing a shower.

A whirlwind tour of the continent by bus with 35 other students. My first real beer in a huge beerhall where Hitler tried his 1923 pusch and ended up writing Mein Kamp in a jail cell instead.

I didn't like beer then (our family had been tea-totalling Methodist). But the Germans make VERY GOOD beer. We all had our fill of steins (a liter each, which, for those metrically challenged, is bigger than a quart) and then boarded the bus to go to our evening hotel. The hotel was a long way away. There was no bathroom in the bus. It was a long ride.

Some other quick memories of our tour (these were mostly teachers and college students on holiday) were stopping in a little village in France to have lunch. This was a bottle of rough red wine, a loaf of fresh bread and some local cheese. Another memory was ten of us renting Vespa motor scooters in Venice and riding out to the Venice Lido (beach) and stopping to chat with a fisherman who gave us fresh muscles (uncooked) that we all tried. No one got sick.

Strawberries. I didn't eat them anymore – it took away from the piecework payment for picking. Enough money for paying the “rent” and the occasional cider at the pub and a little left for the traveling I would do after the job.

For the first time in three weeks the sun came out! The temperature went above seventy and Helga, from Sweden, took off her blouse! She had on a VERY substantial brazier (Victoria's Secret was yet to be) but, to an American innocent abroad this was a revelation! It never got warm again while I was there. Darn!

When I left with my worldly goods packed in a Samsonite hard sided suitcase, I hitched to the outskirts of London. I met a fellow in front of his flat

sitting in the sun (happened the day after I left, don't you know) and asked what was the best way to walk to Hyde Park (the site of a hostile in London). He looked at me in my tweed sports coat, Sears 'walking' shoes and told me where the tube (subway) was. After a two minute argument about whether I was walking or tubing he finally believed that I would walk (it turned out to be five miles). His whole face lit up and he began giving me minute directions, loving telling me all the wonders of London on foot. I was on a budget – walking seemed cheaper. It was a long but marvelous walk.

London is fantastic! It is NO place to hitch. I soon found the money I saved by walking was quickly spent on food.

Memories? The flowers in the parks. The taxis zipping about, the double decker buses. the museums, the law courts. Lying in the park on the thick grass, looking up at the sky (as I had done in Paris, Yosemite and Glencarlyn), and realizing the sky was a common denominator wherever you were in the world; that was a very comforting thought..

No one “called home.” Too expensive. If you called, you'd better be dead or have a real good reason. A few post cards (from me) and no other contact. I was friendly and the people were friendly, also something that was universal.

I tried to hitch to Stone Henge. People on holiday DON'T pick up hitchhikers. There is really nothing else at the end of that road. I had packed a light bag and spent half the day walking and hitching. Well, walking, really. I finally gave it up as a bad idea and finished the only sustenance I had brought with me – a bottle of Bulmer's Woodpecker cider. The world looked brighter. I made it back to the hostile before it closed at ten pm.

The museums were all worth the trip. The Louvre, the Metropolitan and many more. Dad had fixed an Olympus camera with a belt holder. I surreptitiously took pictures everywhere.

One less traveled place I recall (and you are unlikely to visit) is the bar under the end of London Bridge – a grungy affair. It was afternoon and I

stopped for some food. A 'porkpie' and a cider. The bar consisted of a foot wide slit six feet long where you gave your order and your money. The "tables and chairs" were assorted sized barrels. Strange. I asked why this specific décor and was told it got pretty rough on most nights and through attrition the management had found this set up the least susceptible to breakage. I made a note NOT to return after dark.

St. Paul's is amazing! I met a fellow who said he had 'cracked' the way to get into the maze of blocked hallways and subterranean places in the building and wanted to know if I'd like to go with him when he went again. NO.

Oxford and Cambridge were worth the trip as was Stratford on Avon and Coventry.

Hitching on the continent was always fun. I remember riding on the back of a motorcycle at high speed with one hand holding onto a fellow and the other clutching my suitcase which was blowing in the wind (60mph or so).

Walking the streets of Amsterdam was interesting, and at night, the red light district was educational.

Speaking of Amsterdam, there is a little factory there (Heineken) which serves a great breakfast, if you like GREAT beer and some cheese. While waiting in line I struck up a conversation with a fellow behind me. I asked if he had ever been on this tour before. He said 'every morning for the last month!'

After two steins of beer and a couple of chunks of good cheese, they gave us some post cards and a half hour or so to write to whomever. My postcards were VERY cheery that morning.

My eventual destination was Luxemburg and a plane back to New York. There was an add for a wonderful Zundap 250 two cycle motor-cycle for an amazingly low price. I could afford that! No more hitching! Then I thought of the tags and insurance and ... I was short a bunch. As I walked away from the US Army post where the Zundap was being

sold, some cute women waved from a second floor window and seemed truly enamored by my manliness. I was flattered. Then a soldier told me the lovely establishment was one of the better known houses of ill repute. Ego is a fragile thing when you're young.

Some of the students I had arrived with a month and a half earlier were at the hostile awaiting their flight back on the 19 hour Icelandic Airline 'express'. We compared notes and even went out for a final drink in Luxemburg.

When I boarded the plane to New York (via enchanting Iceland, again) I felt in my pocket for money. All that was left was ten cents for a call to my folks to pick me up. I hoped they answered when I called.



Looking at the cherry tree in the cold winter



(late 50's)

Snow Daze

The weather had been REALLY cold. The three of us, Alan, Billy and I, thought it was such a waste. All this cold weather and not even a hint of snow.

Christmas had been crisp and sharp. We had delivered the greens (our annual family tradition Christmas eve 'Christmas card' to our neighbors), and felt the bone chilling affect all over when we got into the house at midnight of Christmas eve.

Cloudy days of frigid temperatures just kept coming with no snow. This wasn't fair! All the school children were asking all

the powers that be to help get us snow to no avail. I also believe, this was a fervent hope of many of our teachers. After all, we had an extra three days – sort of an early 'use it or lose it policy' of the school board, built into the school schedule. We either took 'snow days' or finished the year with no shorten-

ing of the time for no snow (or good behavior).

Then on Wednesday evening in mid February, the snow came! It was glorious! We watched in the shortened evening hours as the snow twinkled and swirled and piled up. When it got too dark to watch, we would turn on the front light to just make sure the snow had not stopped. It just kept coming. Preparation for lessons for the following day included a large helping of hoping for a snow day.

YESSSS! There were at least six inches of snow on the ground and the heavens were still adding delightful inches to the count as we watched in excited wonder.

Of course Harden and Weaver (on WMAL) had the news that the schools had been canceled. Jubilation reined! School papers? HAH! Study for a test on Friday? Why? We wouldn't have had the time to

get prepped by our teacher and besides, the snow day MIGHT go to two – if all went well.

Dad got the little VW out of the garage and plowed his way out to go to work. Mom resigned herself to a day of having a rowdy three boys (Billy in high school and Alan and I in Jr. High).

All day long we played in the snow – sledding followed by snowball fights as the sun came out in the afternoon and the temperature went up to a warm 40 and the snow became perfect! A few snow men were built as the sun slipped toward the horizon. Just perfect!

And they predicted a hard freeze during the night! Billy got on the ‘hotline’ to hear what was going to happen on Friday with the schools. He found he could talk between the announcements and, very shortly, had met a seemingly nice young lady and set up a date for the next week. Ah, the wonders of modern technology.

YESSSSS! Friday was another snow day. Our ardor had somewhat lessened for the mounds of cold stuff but we awakened to a crusted snow that was lousy for sledding (downright dangerous) and no good for snowballs.

Monday was a shock – everything had to be made up and doubled down to get done.

Then Wednesday came and that evening, another snow storm! The clouds opened and poured fourth the white fluffy stuff. Who would have believed it! Another snow day. Another round of jubilation. Mother was not as enthusiastic. Dad struggled through the mounds of snow to work. We all had fun and mother made sure we had hot soup for lunch and even

some popcorn cooked over the coal fire in the living room.

It froze solid on Thursday night. What a mess the roads were. EEEEEHHHAA!

Friday was another reprieve from school. This could get to be habit forming! Well, we now had used up our allotted snow days for the year plus one. Good! Maybe. What a wonderful weekend. Then another crammed Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and then – more snow! The clouds formed and dumped all over us. Another two days off.

Our enthusiasm was definitely waning. Billy’s date had turned out to be a dud. The still lousy roads on Saturday night may have had something to do with it. Billy just said, ‘No compatibility.’ He tried the ‘hotline’ several times but struck out.

Sledding was still fun but the cold, well, seemed colder. We still had snowball fights but, my arm was sore and someone had hit me a direct shot to the face. It was a slushy ‘ball’ and stung for two days. The tests that had been put off took place on Monday or Tuesday. The delay didn’t help.

Another Monday and another cramming for lost time and work. The piles of snow on the side of the roads and driveways were not going away since every night the cold kept everything intact and the snow was a real ongoing pain to navigate for us all. Climbing over snow banks to get somewhere became a joyless chore.

When we got to Wednesday of the fourth week, the number of prayers by students and teachers (and parents and public officials) must have gone to a new low. But the gods of snow are far away (seemingly) and hadn’t gotten our modi-

fied request.

Uhhhhh Yess! Once more, six inches of rotten snow followed by the icy cold and two days of stalled snow removal and snow days. Now we were in “snow day” deficit for the school year. Eight days spent on snow days and only three allotted by the school board. We, of the more rational, enlightened nature (students and I’m SURE teachers) felt that it was only right that we be able to borrow from the several years of not using snow days to offset the over usage of this year. Logic and the legislature don’t seem to go hand in hand. Each year has to stand on its own. We’ll be in school into the summer vacation! This last point was not lost on us.

The crazy cycle of weather was finally broken during the fifth week of winter. We all held our collective breath on Wednesday and were pleasantly surprised when the sun rose on Thursday with no threat of snow.

Although we enjoyed the respite from the ongoing grind of studying in the middle of winter, there is something to be said for the freedom from the curriculum during a warm day in spring verses the cold of the winter season.

I walked over to the field and looked at the reddening cherries on the cherry tree before heading for Kenmore and school on a warm soft June day. It seemed the tradeoff of time off in the middle of a cold, cheerless winter for the warmth and promise of spring, although fun at the time, was really not worth it.



All ready for a party! Wasn't it pretty!

MORE SNOW

The question always asked: Do children pray as hard for snow as the teachers?

We've had mild winters and harsh winters in the Village. I remember asking Henry Jarboe in 1958, our long time neighbor (avid hunter and bricklayer) about the "cooling of our climate" and how (as my learned 6th grade teacher, Mrs. Rogers, explained) scientist felt sunspots were the culprit. I patiently explained to Henry, as only a sixth grader full of new found wisdom can, this new found absolute truth of the ages. The craze then was we were all going to freeze to death in the coming ice age. His deep thoughtful answer; "Sunbeams, cow chips, whatever. It gets warm some years and cold some years." A real philoso-

pher was Henry.

Before a snowstorm, you could go outside and smell it coming. It was a combination of wood smoke, coal smoke (we had coal fires in our house then) and the "freshness" in the air. Then the snow would begin to filter down – so soft – sifting down into the woods. The trees would stick out of the snow on the far hills like an old man's stubble – all black bristles against the white of the snow.

We had the back hill (the one that had the path down to the Nature Center from the field, before the six trees that fell during the June '08 storm blocked the path). We would get on the path on our sleds and slide down to .. sometimes, the stream. We'd get frozen through after awhile and come up to the house and get warm in front of the fireplace with warm cocoa and popcorn.

When I was in sixth grade, Luis Allen (THE weatherman who Dad swore by) said there was going to be a light dusting the next day. All the other forecasts were for MANY inches of the white stuff. We woke in the morning to the slate gray skies and little drifting flakes of the incoming storm. The three of us (Billy, Alan and I) were told to get to school (Glencarlyn, located at the bottom of the hill for me and Alan – now Campbell elementary and Kenmore for Billy). All day I watched out of the windows in Mrs. Roger's room as the snow slowly accumulated. Around 1:30 with four inches on the ground, the skies really opened up. You couldn't see Carlin Springs Road from the windows (about 100' away). Very soon thereafter, with over twelve inches of snow on the ground, and snowing harder than ever, the school board called it a day and canceled school. (please see THE LONG WALK HOME P154)

I struggled through 25' of snow to get home through the woods. My shoes were full of snow and I was frozen. When we turned on Dad's Luis Allen program that evening, there was a substitute weather man. Luis was snowed in at home and couldn't get to the station.

In the late 50's, we had one year that became a running joke. Every Thursday for one whole month it snowed so much, school was canceled every Thursday and Friday (please see SNOW DAZE P 148).

These were 6" plus snow storms each week for a month of Thursdays. We were in Jr. and Senior high school and Billy would get on the "snow line" (on the phone) to see if school was on. If you were good, you could talk to whoever else was on the "snow line" at the same time. Billy landed a date from that. That winter was the first time my folks strapped the old wooden skis on me and told me to slide up to Hamilton's store (where the 7-11 is) for milk.

It got so cold in the 60's, Arlington County was rumored to be thinking about getting a snow making machine to use on the long road into the

Hickman's old house (now the Nature Center; the road at the south end of Jefferson St. then) for a ski operation (run by the county). These were also the years you could go to Washington, VA to go skiing. We went to the Washington VA ski area. It was fun although the snow was a little mushy late in the days in March.

One Sunday in February 1963, I remember waking up and the temperature was in the mid 60's. We quickly got together a group and had a softball game that morning in the field behind my Aunts house on 5th St. Around 2 that afternoon I stood in the middle of the same field in three inches of snow.

The park roads were perfect for sledding. They curved a bit, but with a good sled you could really fly! In 1961, we woke to a wonderful crisp 14' snow fall. The radio said school was closed so we three boys headed for the hills – literally. We spent the day sliding and walking back up the hills. As the day progressed, the snow got less slick, more sodden with the temperatures into the upper 30's.

That night the world froze solid. We woke to another day off and headed for the hills again. The perfect sledding snow had turned into a treacherous ice rink! Billy (my older brother) came home after a half hour. He had missed the turn on the hill at the end of 4th street into the park and had ripped a part of his thumbnail off. My Mother consoled him and wrapped up the thumb and had him propped in front of the TV when I arrived home from my accident.

I had missed the turn on the hill into the park at the end of 3rd St. I went face first into a tree at It seemed awfully fast to me! I was bloody – messed up nose and really miserable. Mother forgot all about Billy and got to work on #2 son. I was soaking up all the attention (even though my face hurt, I still liked the attention), when Alan staggered home. He had gone down the hill on the north end of Jefferson Street into the park and had slid sideways into the galva-

nized 3" diameter steel pipe that held the park trash can in place. Mother took one look at Alan and we all were in the '58 VW bus sliding on the snow covered streets going to the hospital. They took out what was left of Alan's spleen. The doctor gave him one hour to live if Mother hadn't headed directly to the hospital.

You can tell when the snow is right for packing. Packed snow is fun! We used to make snowballs, and it was rumored, pelt cars from the hill overlooking Carlin Springs Road (where the hospital is now). This practice is (and was) frowned upon.

One season in '63, we had around thirty worthy teens and dads (I don't remember any mothers or daughters then) in a block long pitched snowball fight on 4th Street between Jefferson and Illinois St. that went on for an hour or so. No one was hurt and everyone had fun!

Unless you soaked a snowball in water and hit someone in the face, snowballs didn't permanently injure anyone. It was the loss of face to be hit by the snowball! Dodge ball put many of us in good standing for throwing a snowball and dodging the inevitable consequences. My favorite trick was to make two snowballs, throw one in a high arch, and when my esteemed opponent was looking at the arching snowball, throw the other snowball directly at them. This was devious but effective. Alan watched me do this several times. When I tried it on him, he kept looking at me directly for the anticipated second snowball. I threw, he dodged with a laugh, and the arching snowball landed on top of his head.

It's been said the cold and snow are now a thing of the past. I hope Henry was right. Snow is cold, inconvenient, sometimes dangerous, and it makes us work (digging out the house and car etc.) but it is the miracle and beauty of our season.

Wednesday, February,
1957



THE LONG WALK HOME.

Cold! I stood on our front porch looking at the auntie's house on the corner. Wood smoke rose from the chimney - Aunt Hadassah was up making coffee on the old pot belly stove in the kitchen. Aunt Constance would come downstairs when she smelled the fresh brew.

That morning Pepper, our dog, had looked at me from his place in front of the coal fire. He just looked up, thumped his tail on the carpet twice and put his head back on his paws. He'd been out earlier and knew it was too cold today.

My coat felt good. With my books tucked under my arm, my lunch bag in my hand, I turned left off the porch to go to Glencarlyn Elementary School by the stream on Carlyn Springs Rd. The sky was slate gray and glowering. The weatherman had said a possibility of snow today. Not a big possibility, but some. Good! Maybe we would get out of school.

It wasn't that school was bad. Mrs. Rogers, who taught sixth grade, was somewhat a look alike to Marilyn Monroe – blond hair, same sort of figure but with a wit and zest that stands out in my memory even today. I was of the age that she was impressing me with her knowledge but

there was something ELSE that made her special.

I crossed the dirt driveway as I headed out cross country to school. Dad had left an hour earlier but the ground was frozen and his car left no tracks on the frozen hard packed red clay. My brothers had left for school earlier, too. Alan liked to go up 5th Street and then down Carlin Springs Rd. but that took twice as long. Billy had walked the three quarters mile up to Kenmore a half hour earlier.

My ripple sole shoes crunched the frozen raised grass by the shed and a slow piercing breeze came from the direction of our house carrying the scent of the coal fire and the oil burner to me on the cold air. As I crossed the crunchy grass field, I smelled the better aroma of the auntie's wood stove.

Going by Schultz's old house in the woods to get on his dirt entry road, the first tiny flake of snow floated down and melted on the side of my nose. Too small! You've got to do better than that!

By the time I crossed over Long Branch creek to get to school, it was beginning to snow very lightly, but it was noticeable. I saw the snow hit the pavement on Carlin Springs Rd. and stick. YES!

Mrs. Rogers looked very nice that day. She always looked nice and had a special twinkle in her eye. She lived to teach and loved her classes. You could feel it.

Our new IBM school clock over the

doorway moved two minutes forward as the school synchronized the clocks from the office and off we went into the wonderful world of 6th grade learning. The snow had continued in its desultory light falling. Silent prayers from EVERYONE in the classroom asked for MORE snow and SOON!

The early lunch bell rang and we got our bag lunches and walked in line to the cafeteria / gym / auditorium located across from the principal's office. The Formica topped folding tables had been lowered from their "Murphy bed" resting places in the wall onto the "multi-purpose room gym floor." We went through the line to get our milk (and lunches for some) and then to our tables. We could sit wherever we wanted but, as the top class (there were two sixth grade classes), we didn't mix with the "kids."

There was an excitement in the air. SNOW! Every school kid's (and most teacher's) dream. The piercing cold was a price you had to pay for the wonders of a snow day! But it was still a slow, tiny flaked dream which built up hopes but not much of the needed accumulation. The school board was not going to give in to some snow flurries (and school kid's prayers).

Lunch over, we headed back to the classroom. Mrs. Roger's windows faced north; if I scooched forward and looked behind me, I could see Carlin Springs Road from my seat. The snow was still slow, but steady. Steady was nice, slow

and small were disappointing. We were resigned.

Around one thirty the weather turned frenzied. The light snow gave way to a gush of big flakes pushed by a strong wind from the north. Hopes soared! Ms. Rogers said that's what usually happened at the end of a snow storm. There was some wistfulness mixed with her imparting of this pearl of wisdom.

But the snow didn't abate! The sky seemed to lower and the frenzy intensified. YES! I looked over my shoulder to see Carlin Springs Rd. It was gone! Nothing but a white avalanche of snow was to be seen in the air obscuring everything beyond a few yards. There was a hush of wonder and expectation in the room! Lessons? We were living a lesson that would live with us for the rest of our lives.

Finally the loud speaker over the blackboard crackled and the principal came on the PA. "Due to inclement weather, the school board has ordered the closing of the school as of now. Those children who walk to school are dismissed now and those that ride, please meet in the multipurpose room to wait for your buses." Crackle!

"YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEHHHAAAAAA AAAAAAA!" was the universal cry. It was tempered with the realization that getting the day off now was going to mean a hard walk (or ride) getting home.

I grabbed my coat and headed out the front door, across the brook, ready to re-

trace my walk home. The snow was now at least a foot deep under the trees and deeper where it had drifted. The red clay road to Schultz's house was a broad white expanse of soft white. My ripple soled shoes could grip nicely even in the dry snow. Unfortunately they quickly filled up on the inside with snow.

Trudging through the woods in the deep snow, my feet getting numb with each new step, suddenly I thought of Jack London's short story, To Build a Fire. I looked behind me and saw the path I had made was filling with snow. The snow still fell with great gusto blocking my view beyond a few yards. "Wonder how long it will take for them to find my body?" I trudged on.

As I came to the field the snow storm abated somewhat and the field looked like I had envisioned the poem from Robert Frost – the woods slowly filling with snow. But this wasn't so slow and the wind had drifted snow more than two feet deep in spots.

I plowed my way through the deep snow and by the gnarled cherry tree in front of the shed, getting the slightest whiff of the coal fire with the oil furnace mixed in. HOME!

Billy and Alan had beat me home and were in the kitchen getting something hot. I had shaken my jacket at the door, taken off my water logged shoes and come into the living room. Pepper looked up at me from his spot in front of the fire and thumped his tail. I lay down beside him,

with my feet close to the fire with my arm around his furry body. He raised his head and put it on my shoulder and looked at me as if to say "I told you it was a nasty day!"



Shed at edge of the field. Almost home!



about two feet wide consisting of packed dirt. You can still see the old paths along the hillside of the parkland that runs parallel to 3rd Street below Jefferson St. There was also building of dams and throwing rocks in the stream and tennis on the old dirt tennis court at the northwest corner of Illinois and 5th St.

This tennis court was created by a friend of my great aunts in the 20's and consisted of a net, two high (20') fences at either end of the court and open spaces on either side. If you hit the ball wrong it



Alan and David rest on the trampoline between sessions

The trampoline and tennis courts – exercise in the community –

Growing up here there was all the exercise you could stand if you liked to run in the woods along foot paths

either went into the high weeds in the field to the west or rolled across the old dirt road into the poison ivy in the woods on the east side of the court. There really wasn't any real "playground" in the community.

My dad did put up a basketball backboard and hoop on one of the oak trees out front. We would play "horse" and try jump shots and foul

shots but there was one drawback to this wonderful setup. The old oak tree had roots. When you shot a basket and the ball came down through the net, it would hit a root and you had a good time chasing the ball in many unexpected directions.

Dad also decided to 'build' us a tether ball game. He took an old tire, took a ten foot (or so) 3" diameter galvanized pipe and put it in the middle of the tire and filled the tire with cement. As it dried I put some initials into the cement. When it dried, we had the pole and he screwed the top on with a steel 'eye' in the top, attached a rope and, at the end of the rope one of a succession of balls that we three boys did our best to beat to death. This was great for developing eye hand coordination as well as taking out aggression.

We had some 'to the death' tether ball games and my cousin still remembers the time she swears she almost lost her head (really!) to a swift and vengeful game of tetherball.

Another wonderful device we got was a Nissan Trampoline. This was a very expensive exercise machine but was good for helping with eye –

hand coordination.

It was an instant hit! We would be jumping on it every chance we got. The springs were steel and not covered. If you missed the mat when you came down your leg or arm was likely to get caught in the springs. Not fun!

As soon as my folks realized the "attractive nuisance" they had bought, very strict rules were put in place. Any neighbor who wanted to come and use it had to have written permission from their folks. We weren't a litigious neighborhood, but all it takes is one foolish mistake and it could get to be a problem.

We got to the point where we could bounce up to ten feet in the air, still maintain control and then come flying down doing a belly flop or drop on our back onto the mat.

Flips were not encouraged although I got to the point where I could do a quick and dirty one. Something about growing an inch or so each year would throw all the Backus' boys coordination off. If you missed a flip, it usually meant an argument with the steel springs.

We tried keeping the trampoline on the front porch but when you

really bounced, your head bounced off the ceiling. We moved it out in the front lawn shortly after we made this unfortunate discovery.

We had the trampoline for ten years. We tried to keep it clean and dry but the winds would blow the canvas tarp off in rain storms and the uv rays in combination with the rain slowly deteriorated the nylon matt. We realized how shaky this was getting when, one day as I executed a perfect drop from ten feet up to land on my back on the mat, we heard a 'rrrrriiiiiipppp!'. We quickly looked underneath and found the two layered mat had only one layer intact and the other with a five foot rip. This was not a good sign and the trampoline was soon rolled back to the front porch and stored in a 'buttoned up' way that would not allow any usage.

The cost of a new matt and the rusting springs were prohibitive when my folks were trying to save to put three boys through college. We donated the remains to someone and that was the end of our trampoline days.

