



February 2015

Barcroft News

Vol 112, Issue 6

George Washington's Barcroft Connection

By Carol Harvey

Near the W&OD bike trail there is a short stone column overlooking Four Mile Run across from the dog park. The words on the column are long worn away by the elements, and there are a new masonry walk and wall. Why was this there? As I often do, I consulted the sage of Barcroft, Randy Swart. He told me that the column recorded the location of a tree that George Washington used as a marker when surveying his land, and that part of the tree trunk is inside the Glen Carlyn library. I went exploring in the local history room at Central Library and learned that George Washington had indeed been our neighbor but not without some difficulty.

Washington learned about the Four Mile Run tract land in December 1773 when George Mason wrote a letter advising him that two land patents were available for purchase, one "tollerable good, and the other mean." Washington proposed that he and Mason ride the property to examine it, but left for Philadelphia to take command of the Continental Army in June. He would be gone for the next eight years, purchasing and man-

aging the land from a distance through family members and employees.

Finally, in 1885, he set out to see and measure his land. Land surveys in such thick forest were a challenge, even for men younger than Washington, who was by then 67. Before the 1770's most surveys had been made with ships' compasses resting on a Jacob's staff for stability. Directions were taken by degrees following the compass' needle. Distances were measured by chain lengths based upon poles. Without a true meridian, subsequent surveys could show differ-

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Next BSCL Meeting -- Thursday, February 5, 7:30 p.m.

Join us at the Community House on February 5 to hear county board member John Vihstadt, who will discuss and answer questions about key issues impacting Columbia Pike and the county. ●



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Monthly Happenings

President's Report by Eric Harold

Happy Winter, Barcroft! It's been a cold and wet one, with school delays and other fun winter weather. Here's to a balmy February and an early arrival of spring!

This month's meeting, organized by VP Chris, promises to be a good one. John Vihstadt will be there to provide an update on state of the County and to take any questions and concerns. Please join us on Thursday, February 5. •



Rachel Ruddle Passes Away

Long-time Barcroft resident Rachel Ruddle recently passed away at a nursing home at the age of 96, according to her 4th Street next-door-neighbor Michael Nazareth. She and her husband Bill purchased their Barcroft home in 1964. She continued to live there until 2013, even after her husband's death.

"Their story was a true love story," says Nazareth. "She was alone a long time, but she remained devoted to her husband's memory after he passed away. She was a quiet, friendly neighbor who would look after our kids when they were young. "

Rachel and Bill Ruddle are laid to rest in Franklyn, West Virginia. •

New July 4th Parade Chairman Sought

By Andrew Hunter

For 17 years now I have served as the Chairman of the Barcroft 4th of July Parade and I have loved doing every one of them! Folks have joked that the title includes "chairman for life." It has been a labor of love and the reward has been seeing the smiles and memories made for so many in the neighborhood. It is one of the best things our neighborhood has going for it.

The parade will go on, but I need to relinquish my position. It is time and change is healthy.

I would like someone or a few someone's to step forward to take my place for this next year's parade. My commitment is that I will serve as a trainer/advisor for this coming year's parade. It is not complicated and is a lot of fun. Katherine McGwier has helped me for many years and she too is seeing this as her last year to help.

If you are interested please contact me. It would be helpful to have two or three folks willing to help. It really does not take much time and really all happens the two weeks

leading up to the 4th of July. There are numerous people who can be called on to help and I will give you all their names as well as a guide on what to do to get you started.

Please contact me at: 703-979-8247 or andrew.hunter129@verizon.net.

It has been a privilege to give my time and energy to this neighborhood I love. ●

The annual 4th of July Parade is a highlight of Barcroft's year. After chairing it for 17 years, Andrew Hunter is searching for a neighborhood volunteer to serve as a new leader.



Winter News from Barcroft Elementary

By Jenny Ditta, Barcroft Elementary Liaison

Students resumed school on Tuesday, January 6, despite the best efforts of Mother Nature to derail smooth operations with snow and ice. The third quarter of school is now well underway, and students have resumed the regular school routine.

Highlights in January include week-long swimming lessons for third grade students at Wakefield High School. All of the students enjoyed a special humanities classical hip-hop musical performance on the afternoon of Wednesday, January 14. Second quarter report cards were distributed on Wednesday, January 21, and that evening, the school held a Translation Night for families needing assistance understanding the grading system. A Family Fitness Night Skating at Thomas Jefferson event was held on the evening of Saturday, January 24.

Highlights in February include the February PTA meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 3. All are welcome to attend. Parent-Teacher conferences will be held on February 4, 5 and 6, with no school for students on February 5 and 6.

Beginning February 9 and lasting through May, enrolled students will take after school enrichment classes, including classes in chess, science, sports, hip hop, art, and Spanish Chorus.

The PTA will hold its first annual Father/Daughter and Mother/Son Dance on Fri-

day, February 13, beginning at 6 p.m. In honor of Valentine's Day, students may ask an adult family member or close family friend to attend the Friday evening dance, which will feature music, great food, and a photo memory booth. Students are getting excited! We hope that all of our neighbors stay warm and safe this Winter!

Barcroft News Volunteers Needed

A Distribution Volunteer is needed for the 4604-4670 block of 3rd Street, South.

Contact Publisher Christine Hopkins at christinehopkins@kw.com or 703-350-2101.



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Flavors of the Season: Cocoa Dutch Baby

By Kari Hickman,

Virtualgoodyplate.blogspot.com

February is my favorite month! One, it's my birthday (all month). Two, Valentine's Day. Who doesn't love LOVE and chocolate and hearts (and chocolate hearts)? Three, National Pancake Day - this year it's on February

17. The recipe below can go for ALL THREE, or any other day this month. It's fast enough for a weekday brekkie, easy enough for kids to help make, chocolate enough for dessert, and definitely sweet enough to tell anyone, "I love you, baby" (even if you're not Dutch).



Cocoa Dutch Baby

Serves 4 to 6

- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 3 large eggs
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 1/4 tsp coarse salt
- 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 T unsalted butter
- 3 T confectioners' sugar, for dusting

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. In a blender, combine milk, eggs, flour, cocoa powder, salt, vanilla, and granulated sugar. Blend until foamy, 1 minute. In a 10-inch cast-iron skillet,* melt butter over medium. Pour batter into skillet and immediately transfer to oven. Bake until puffed and set, 20 minutes. Dust with confectioners' sugar and serve immediately. We like to have it with whipped cream, strawberries or bananas, and a drizzle of chocolate sauce.

*If you don't have a 10-inch cast iron skillet, you can also use a 9-inch round cake pan. •



Nature's Reluctant Strippers

By Debora Southwell

Biologists call it marcescence. Others might call it keeping a Christmas tree one month too long. I call it the material on the floor of my son's room. But most of you call it the brown leaves you see suspended from certain trees in the dead of winter.

In the language of science you are referring to marcescent foliage -- that is, withered leaves that remain attached to the stem. In the language of human nature, the adjectives stubborn and determined come to mind. The "hang tight" idea provides an opportunity to group trees in a unique way and allows us to get a better sense of tree leaves that do fall during the year, leaves that hang in there for at least 360 days, and leaves that just seem to dangle with no end in sight.

If we go back to the planet's first trees, we have the evergreens. These are the "tall plants" that hang onto their broadleaves (or needles for conifers) for more than one year. As earth's development marched on, alterations in the plant world also occurred. Eventually (emphasis on the extended version of eventual), trees with leaves that fell off their branches before a full year passed joined the evergreens. This newer category, deciduous trees, drop their leaves at a particular times (wide timing variation though) year after year.

Along the leaf clinging spectrum, there is a third group of trees found some-

where in-between evergreen and deciduous. Can you guess these mystery trees? They certainly grow in the Barcroft community. That's right, the trees flaunting a different life approach are beech and oak. Even now in February, these trees hang steadfastly to many of their lifeless leaves.

Biologists know well that marcescence is a juvenile trait, one found among young trees. Why might beech and oak act like the resistant child not wanting to give up what other children have released? Are there fruitful reasons for this state of immaturity? There just might be. For those trees that find themselves living in dry, impoverished land, this resolute trait may be just the ticket to survival. By slowing leaf decomposition, these immature trees give the gift of compost right when parental trees need it in the spring. Other advantages may include leaves that provide a way to capture snow and thus retain moisture for the tree, and/or leaves that cover buds from frost or even from the nibbling teeth of deer.

In closing, a stanza from Oliver Wendell Holmes' "The Last Leaf":

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling. •

City Foxes

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

Walking along the trails around Long Branch Nature Center, especially in winter, I sometimes catch a whiff of something that smells a little skunky. Rather than a skunk, though, this is the calling card of a red fox. These scent marks are left when a fox urinates and contain messages about territory, readiness to mate, and dominance.

Winter is a great time to look for foxes and Arlington is home to more than a few of these urban adaptable canines. Although foxes are primarily nocturnal, it's not unusual to see one out hunting during the day in winter. Nonetheless, foxes are elusive and seeing one is an uncommon treat.

View them at a discrete distance, however, and move away if one is acting aggressively or seems unusually tame – which can be a sign of rabies. Healthy foxes will usually run away or at just go about their business when they spot a human.

If you don't see a fox, you might well come across fox sign. In addition to scent marks, foxes often leave their scat (aka feces) in an obvious location, such as on top of a rock. Scat is also a message to other foxes.

Fox scat is usually dark and often twisted to a point at the ends and the contents reflect seasonal variation in fox diets. In winter, it is usually composed of hair from small mammals. Late-summer and fall scat contains

seeds from fruit and summer scat often includes many insect parts. Never touch any scat, however, as it can transmit disease and parasites.

Another fox sign to look for are tracks, especially in fresh snow. Fox tracks can be easily mistaken for those of a small dog, but there are clues that can help. Unlike your dog, foxes work for a living and don't have time to wander aimlessly about. Their tracks tend to run fairly straight and aren't usually accompanied by human footprints.

Following fox tracks might lead you to signs of hunting and even a kill. Foxes locate voles and other prey under the snow by sound and pounce, cat-like, when they detect their quarry. This leaves a hole in the snow and you might even see a little blood if the pounce was successful.

Vocalizations can also reveal the presence of foxes, especially during the mating season. They make a variety of barks and shrieks which sometimes sound like the scream of a woman or child. Fox pairs may also call back and forth with contact calls.

Keep an eye, nose, and ear out for foxes in your neighborhood. We have two species of fox in Arlington, red fox and the locally rarer gray fox. The latter are less adaptable to the urban environment but can still be found in some parts of the county, especially near the Potomac. I'll relate the fascinating story of their very different origins in our region

Winter Greetings from Our Savior Lutheran School

By OSLS National Junior Honor Society

Thank you to everyone who stopped by at our open house in January. We are currently accepting applications for grades PreK through 8th. We offer before and after care, making us an easy choice for anyone who works at the Pentagon, NFATC or the ANGRC.

We went to remind the Barcroft neighborhood that Our Savior acts as a Market Day pick-up site every month. Market Day is a ready-made meal company that delivers frozen food to the school. Community members can place an order through www.MarketDay.com and pick it up on the monthly delivery day, usually the first Tuesday

of the month, with the deadline to order being the previous Wednesday. Check out the website for more information or to order.

Box Tops for Education is a unique way to raise money for schools and make a difference. Box Tops are those little pink coupons you see on box goods at the store. Once you start looking, you'll see them everywhere. At Our Savior, we challenge each grade every month to bring in the most box tops. If you are looking for a way to support our school, and have some box tops for education lying around, you can stop by our school office and drop them off. ●

First Snowfall

By Inge Nealis

We recently received our first snowfall in Arlington. Many parents and kids hoped that school would be canceled because of the traffic that the weather would cause. Arlington officials check the weather and road conditions early in the morning and decide what should happen, whether schools should have a delayed opening or be closed. Unfortunately early in the morning they could not make a valid decision on why the schools should be closed or delayed. The weather only continued to get worse and parents and students grew mad and upset that the schools were not closed. Many Arlington citizens thought

that the schools should have been closed or at least they should have been given a two hour delay since that is how long it took most kids to get to school. Many students used social media as their way of expressing their feelings, unfortunately not all the comments were kept appropriate. Many of the school buses stopped picking kids up because the road conditions were declared unsafe. Patrick Murphy apologized for the inconvenience he caused all the parents and kids later that evening. He also asked that any more comments on social media be kept appropriate. Many students and parents are hopeful that this situation won't happen again. ●

George Washington's Barcroft Connection, *cont.*

Continued from page 1

ent results because the magnetic meridian changes. Streams were useful landmarks, but they meandered and carved new routes. There was no Columbia Pike or other road for Washington to use as a guide, so he looked for sturdy trees to mark the boundaries of property.

One enterprising and cruel landowner, a member of the Ball family, took a servant and viciously beat him so that he would remember the property edge. When Washington was finally able to survey his land, he went to a corner "within about 3 poles of the Run a White Oak, 18 inches in diameter, on the side of a hill... And after having run one course and part of another, my servant William, (one of the Chain Carriers) fell and broke the pan of his knee, wch. put a stop to my Surveying; and with much difficulty I was able to get a sled to carry him on, as he could neither Walk, stand, or ride." Washington did not finish his survey until the next year.

While he was away, Washington received reports of trespassing and plundering of his land. "The growth of the land is more valuable than the land itself," he wrote to Dr. David Stuart, directing his managers to "put a stop to the continued depredations." His neighbor, Mr. Terret, was "a pretty considerable trespasser." When surveying and setting

the boundaries of his property, Washington wanted his neighbors to participate so that all could see and agree on the boundaries. Of Mr. Terret, he commented, "it would not be strange if corner and line trees both are cut down; nor very strange,... if he should not endeavor to perplex, and mislead thereabouts."

From General Washington's original survey of the plot we find that he was unable to locate three corner trees, but lo- •

International Terrorism

By Markarius Nealis

Just this past week France experienced a terrifying event. A terrorist attack on a supermarket in Paris. The terrorist was Frenchman Amedy Coulibaly. He is believed to have bought his weapons from a well known arms dealer in Brussels. Coulibaly went into a kosher supermarket and took dozens of hostages. Coulibaly forced the hostages to destroy the cameras, unaware that the cameras film were remotely backed up. He was also apparently linked with the Kouachi brothers who had earlier attacked the Charlie Hebdo newspaper offices. Coulibaly threatened to kill the hostages if the police did not let Kouachi brothers go. Almost immediately police forces were assembled to converge on the two locations. In the end of it all 12 people were killed plus the three gunmen. I believe this is a frightening awaking in the midst of terrorism so close to home. •

Neighbor to Neighbor Listings

These ads are free to BSCL members, and run on a space-available basis. The listings run for three months unless removal or update is requested.

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

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

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

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

Kevin's Media: Will convert VHS tapes, TC30 tapes, Laserdiscs and 35mm photograph slides to DVD. Professional packaging/artwork included upon prior request. Please inquire for rates. Email kevinmedia118@gmail.com or text/call 703-919-7605.

Babysitter, house/pet sitter: Carmen Dunlap, responsible 17 year old. Available weekends and weeknights. Dunlap.carmen@ymail.com.

Furniture for Sale: Blue wing chair — \$25 or best offer; electric organ with bench and one broken key — \$100 or best offer. Contact Mae Kmeco at 703-892-6861.

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

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

Your neighborhood Beachbody coach is here to help you achieve your nutrition and fitness resolutions. I'm a distributor of workout and nutrition programs like P90X and Insanity. If you want to chat about your wellness goals for free, my website is: www.laurenhefnerfitness.com.

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

UHC Computer Repair: Please see website for a list of services/prices: www.uhccomputer-repair.com. Cell: 571-733-3401, office: 703-825-3862. If you bring your computer to my Bailey's Crossroads office your first diagnosis will be free. Call before coming. I charge \$60/hour for house calls.

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



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

On January 8, 2015 President Obama laid out the administration's latest effort to breathe new life into the nation's housing market and increase the ranks of first-time buyers, now at a 27-year low. On January 26, the FHA will lower the rate of the annual mortgage insurance premium paid on agency-backed 30-year fixed loans by a half percentage point from the current 1.35 percent, to 0.85 percent of the loan balance. **The administration estimates that the decrease will trim a borrower's annual payment by \$900 and enable 250,000 people to buy their first homes during the next three years.** The reduction applies only to new home loans and refinancings insured by the FHA. That means existing FHA-backed loans would need to be refinanced to receive the lower rate. Obama said the reduced premiums would spur home buying, lifting the market and home values.

But he cautioned that the smaller premiums did not mean a return to lax home-lending standards. The FHA announcement followed a policy change announced last month by **Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to begin accepting mortgages with 3 percent down payments.**

Looking to get the best results when buying or selling? Put my 30 years of local market experience and knowledge to work! Contact me for advice on finding the best mortgage lenders to use in the DC area and ask for my FREE report "The 10 Dumbest Mistakes Smart People Make when Buying or Selling a Home...and How to Avoid Them".

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