



February 2009

Vol 106, Issue 6

Barcroft News

President's Report

by Heidi Wicker

As spring approaches (or at least as we wish it would), it is time to turn our focus to the outdoors.

At our next BSCL meeting, we will discuss what enhancements we would like to see at the park at Four Mile Run and Columbia Pike to make that area more accessible and enjoyable for all, as well as a sustainable park area. The BSCL membership voted last year for this to be our first priority project from our new neighborhood conservation plan for funding from the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee. Please join us on **Thursday, February 5 at 7:30pm** at the Community House (800 S. Buchanan).

At our previous BSCL meeting, Pamela Holcomb, Barcroft resident and managing director of the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization, gave us an in-depth look at the many current and upcoming developments up and down the Pike.

In sum, two of the developments closest to Barcroft—the new community center/apartments/retail complex slated for the Arlington Mills Community Center site and the apartments/retail slated for the former Bob & Edith's site—are still looking for financing.

Another development close by, the “*55 Hundred*” building (at Greenbrier Street) which will be a 10-story mixed use building, is rising steadily and should be done by mid-summer. For details on other developments you may be wondering about, please visit CPRO’s website at www.columbiapikepartnership.com.

Finally, many thanks to the Harold family, the Spaghetti Tones band, and all of the other volunteers who helped put on this annual feast. Thank you also to all our neighbors who came out for this fundraiser. It was a great way to warm up on a cold winter evening!

Barcroft News Staff

Editor & Neighborhood News Publisher / Mailing Kathy Kerr, 892-6458
editor@bscl.org
Marge Miller, 703-979-5838
margem@yahoo.com

Advertising Mgr. Jim Kerr, 892-6458
Jim@bscl.org

Deadlines: 15th day of the month preceding the issue month.

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Neighbor to Neighbor Ads

Teenage Babysitter - Week nights and weekends:
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Babysitter: Red Cross certified ninth grader available for neighborhood babysitting. Call Abby at 703-892-1090.

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

Yard Work: Teenager available for raking leaves and other yard work. Call Thomas at 703-979-5838

Babysitting: Brother and sister, ages 14 and 15, can babysit in Barcroft, nights and weekends. Call Thomas or Allison at 703-979-5838.

New baby at your house? Announce it here in the Barcroft News! Contact **Kathy Kerr** 703-892-6458
editor@bscl.org

WANTED: Stories and ideas for the Barcroft News
Contact Kathy Kerr 703-892-6458 or email
kathykerr@gmail.com.

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Check it out at www.BSCL.org

If your name isn't there, you can print the Membership Form, and send it in with your dues, just \$3 for individuals or \$6 for a couple.

If you can, send along a contribution to the **Community House Fund**. It will definitely be appreciated – the exterior desperately needs painting!

Signature Theater

By Carol Harvey

If you could see a Broadway quality musical at half the price five minutes from home, would you be interested? That's what we have at Signature Theater this month. The current production of *Les Misérables* features three leads who played their roles on Broadway and the road. The theaters they played in seated 1500 to 4,000 people. Signature seats 280 and no audience member is more than 5 rows from the stage (although some sit in a balcony overlooking the stage.)

If you haven't been to Signature, you're missing a local gem. Their move from a garage on Four Mile Run to the end of Campbell Avenue in Shirlington makes the theater experience an event. There's free parking (find *that* in DC), including a new lot on Randolph Street with a pedestrian exit right next to Signature's door. There's an elevator to their second floor space but I like to climb the concrete stairs accented by neon and gradually get in the mood, greeted by piano music. I arrive a little early so I can linger over a drink, perhaps with a tasty "Signature Selection" (everything from French onion soup to Provençale Beef Skewer to Gingered Pear White Chocolate Crisp) and watch the street below. You can reserve drinks for the intermission, if you are so inclined, then enjoy the show.

And what a show! I saw *Les Mis* twice – at the Kennedy Center and the National – and wondered what it would lose in Signature's intimate space. Nothing. The cast and orchestra are the same size as they were in the large road shows, but you are almost within reach of them. In the contract to put on the production, Signature was prohibited from having two hallmarks of the Broadway and touring productions: the famous turntable that rotated sets and people, and the step pattern that the rag tag army of students used to "march" at the end of the

first act. I didn't miss them in this "up close and personal" production.

In a free discussion at the theater artistic director Eric Schaeffer said that the script for the almost 3-hour show had only six stage directions. One was "Fontine dies". Eric had to develop his own unique vision for the show. You will be captivated by the familiar songs and plot and totally absorbed by the powerful performances.

Some logistics. Park in the new lot that you enter from Randolph Street (after the movie theater and Campbell Avenue). Parking limits (1 hour in many spaces) are now enforced in the lot by Harris Teeter. Visit the bathrooms before the first act; it's a long one. And when you get your tickets, ask for student and senior rates, if you qualify. Since we're so close, you may find that you are free at the last moment. Stop by the box office an hour before the show, and put your name on a list for "rush tickets". If any seats are still available a half hour before the show, you'll get one for \$30 (less for non-musicals).

Actually, I'd like you to pay the regular price. Signature took a huge leap of faith to put on such an expensive show (33 cast members, 14 in the orchestra) in a theater with too few seats to pay its own way. A generous donor and an extended run will help cover Signature's costs. I'm grateful for Signature's artistic present to us and want to keep their presence in our neighborhood

Box Office (703) 820-9771
www.signature-theater.org.

Les Misérables runs through February 22 but may extend into March.



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Each month Eric Schaffer or Managing Director Maggie Boland hosts free discussions about current or upcoming productions. I got behind the scenes stories and met leading men Greg Stone (Jean Valjean) and Tom Zemon (Inspector Javier) up close and personal.

“Brown Bag” discussions are in the Signature lobby from 1:00 – 2:00 pm the first Thursday of the month. “Page to Stage” discussions are at the Shirlington library at 7:00 pm the first Monday of the month.

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On Thursday February 5 you can meet three-time Helen Hayes Award-winner Holly Twyford now appearing in *The Little Dog Laughed*.

On Monday, February 9 catch a preview of this year's original one-act play written by guest Joe Calarco for the award-winning Signature in the Schools program.

Barcroft Elementary

**4th Annual
Winter Rummage Sale
Saturday, February 7, 2009
9 AM until Noon
Barcroft School Cafeteria**

**Furniture, Household items,
CDs, Knick-knacks,
Clothing, Toys, Bikes and More!**

Your tax-deductible donations of goods for sale are also appreciated. Please drop off your gently used items at the school beginning Feb. 2. Check in at the school office when you arrive. The office will have receipts available for your donation.

Questions? Please contact Leslie Engelking (703) 867-9065. Volunteers are welcome to set up on Friday, Feb. 6 from 6-9pm ☺

New Neighborhood Track

Barcroft Elementary School is building a walking/jogging track on the school grounds. The Barcroft PTA is raising additional funds for the new track which will benefit not only Barcroft students but neighbors who are also encouraged to use and enjoy the new track!

Building a track is especially timely because this year Barcroft started the "Girls on the Run" running group for eligible 3rd, 4th and 5th grade girls. The "Girls on the Run" have already competed in several area races including a 5K run in Reston last year.

To make a tax-deductible contribution in support of the new track, please make checks payable to "Barcroft PTA." For more information, contact Jenny and Chris Ditta at 703 486-2268 or at chrisnjenny4@comcast.net.

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AROUND TOWN

Arlington Home Show & Expo Returns

Saturday, April 11 more than 50 exhibitors will be on hand to offer valuable information, products and services to local homeowners who will benefit from the convenience of one-stop shopping for a wide variety of home improvement solutions.

Admission is FREE to the **3rd annual Arlington Home Show & Expo** which is being presented by the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO) in partnership with Arlington County's Housing Division, and will take place at the Walter Reed Community Center.

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The Arlington Home Show is a convenient way to learn about remodeling kitchens and baths, finishing or waterproofing basements, energy efficient replacement windows and doors, and will include professionals to assist homeowners with electrical, heating and cooling, home security systems, and more.

The show will also include a variety of classes/seminars on subjects of interest to residents and landlords. Exhibitors from Arlington County and area non-profits will also be available to offer valuable advice and assistance.

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend!

Visit www.columbiapikepartnership.com/HomeShow/ for more information.



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AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Barcrofter To Run Marathon for Charity

Barcroft resident Michael Novak likes challenges. A couple years ago after hurting his lower back, he set a goal of running in a 5k race as part of his recovery. He finished the race, but almost passed out because of poor training habits. He then took up bike riding because it put less strain on his back and in 2008 completed the Seagull Century, a 100-mile bike ride held in Salisbury, Maryland. "While biking on the W&OD" Michael said, "I regularly came across a team of runners in purple and white jerseys. I was reminded of my 5k race, and how I could have done better if I had trained better".

Intrigued, he researched the group and learned that they were members of "TNT" (Team in Training), a unique fundraising program run by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society for over 20 years. Volunteer expert trainers work closely with novice athletes, preparing them for endurance events such as marathons, bike rides, and triathlons. In return for coaching, training expertise, and logistical support, participants agree to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Michael's goal is to raise \$2,000. "Reaching out to people in the community, I uncovered stories of how friends and neighbors have been affected by this disease. At one recent training session, several survivors told their stories of how the money raised by TNT helped save their lives."

Ten years ago, Michael and his wife Laura

moved to their 4th St S. home. Their 3 boys, Brendan, Ethan, and Seth are active in local youth soccer, baseball, and flag football teams, and they attend nearby Claremont Spanish Immersion Elementary, where Laura serves as the PTA president. Michael has also coached Kiwanis soccer teams in the past.

The Novaks have enjoyed participating in many of the BSCL events over the years. And two or three times a year, neighbors on their block get a permit from the County to close off 4th St. S. between Taylor and Wakefield St. for their own neighborhood potluck. It's a fun way for the immediate neighbors to get to know each other while their kids enjoy playing together.

On March 22, Michel will run in the "Yuengling Shamrock Marathon" in Virginia Beach, VA. He invites Barcroft neighbors to make a donation on his behalf to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. All the money he collects goes directly to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and is tax deductible.

The Novaks are planning a mid-February open house and fundraiser at their home. Raffle tickets for a brand new Mercedes will be sold for a \$100 donation (not tax deductible), and other items donated by local merchants will be available. If you are interested in attending or making a donation, please contact Michael for more information. His email address is michaeln09@gmail.com and phone number is 703-892-2622.

AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

BSCL SPAGHETTI DINNER

Fun and great food was had by all on Jan. 23 at the BSCL Spaghetti Dinner 23 at the Community House. . Many thanks to **Eric Harold** and his army of helpers including: **Annie Harold, Michael Novak, Judith Richter, Paula and Bob Levine-Alcorn, Maureen Locke, Imogene Mitchell, Helene Stebbins, Jenny Lindenauer and Andrea Usiak.** Some of these folks helped to make the sauce. Others prepared spaghetti noodles at home. Some helped with the salad, bread and drinks while others assisted with serving, set up and clean up. And lots of neighbors brought yummy desserts. Gary Lefebvre collected money at the door all night (Gary, we know that was so you could keep an eye on that dessert table!) **Apologies in advance if any names are missing here. We all thank you too!!**

The world famous SpaghettiTones sounded fantastic and tight as they played music from various parts of the world—from romantic to lively. Thank you to **Julie Gorka, Michael Nazaretz, Larry Robinson, Mia Boynton, Richard Seidel and Walt Robinson** for sharing their musical gifts. And thanks to who ever provided the sound system as it seemed particularly clear.

Until next year!

Special thanks to **Carol Harvey** for submitting several articles to the Barcroft News this month!



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Spy Tour

Hanssen Spy Tour

Saturday February 21 1 – 2 pm

For adults. The infamous spy and traitor Robert Hanssen worked in secrecy for years before being discovered. Some of those clandestine affairs were conducted right in the woods of Long Branch Nature Center. Join Center staff as they unfold the dramatic story, the damage he caused our nation,

and his eventual downfall and arrest, including an FBI stakeout at Long Branch Center. Hear the untold story and see the amphitheater where he stashed his drops for the Russians.

\$4 fee. Registration required. Meet at Long Branch Nature Center. It's a nice walk from Barcroft! Program #624514F.

The State of Barcroft Squirrels

By Carol Harvey

Do you have skinny squirrels? This Fall Long Branch Nature Center got calls from people wanting to know how they could keep squirrels from eating their pumpkins. After a *Washington Post* article described Long Branch staff feeding squirrels because local oak trees produced no acorns this year, the Center started getting calls from people wanting to know how they could help the squirrels.

Should you feed the squirrels? The naturalists say if you want to, go ahead. Most squirrels in our urban environment find enough to eat, courtesy of bird feeders and garbage cans. If you want to keep squirrels away from feeders and garbage, putting peanuts in other locations may help. You don't need to worry about chipmunks because they are hibernating and may only emerge on an unusually warm day. Ayers Hardware in Westover and Costco sell peanuts in bulk.

Long Branch staff feed the flying squirrels every night and report that they come out like

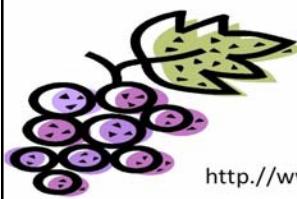
clockwork after dusk. They put out peanut butter (which the squirrels have to stay to eat) to give Center visitors a better view of the elusive nocturnal acrobats.



Long Branch hosts programs about the fliers almost every Saturday and Sunday evening during the winter. There is a \$4 fee and registration is required. To register, call 703-228-4747 or go online to <https://registration.arlingtonva.us/vsiwebtrac.html>.

5:30 – 6:45 pm
Sat. Feb 7, program #624515S
Sun Feb 8, program #624515T

5:45 – 7:00 pm
Sat Feb 21, program # 624515U
Sun Feb 22, program # 624515V
Sat Feb 28, program # 624515W\$



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4701 Arlington Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22203

Causal Worship: 8:20 a.m., Traditional: 11:00 a.m. Sunday

2/8 – Scout Sunday

2/25 – Ash Wednesday Service @ 7:30 p.m.

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Mortgage Rates have recently dropped, although buyers seeking record-low interest rates for loans over \$625,500 may be surprised to find rates between 6.5% and 6.75% with no points as of 1/12/08. Jumbo rates have been higher since frightened investors stopped buying those loans. As the mortgage crisis deepened last year, investors turned to smaller loans that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac buy from lenders and then sell. Fannie and Freddie bought loans up to \$417,000 for several years. Both companies were federally chartered, and investors treated their loans like they were guaranteed by the federal government, making them a safer bet. Last year the government officially took control of Fannie and Freddie. As part of an economic stimulus package, the government raised the loan limits for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac from \$417,000 to \$729,750. On 1/1/09 the \$729,750 cap was lowered to \$625,500. Anything over \$625,500 now falls into the jumbo loan category.

Arlington County preliminary data reveals that the average assessment for single family property will drop 2%, from \$530,100 in 2008 to \$520,100 in 2009. Market statistics from the realtor's mls data base, MRIS, reveal the following sales price declines from November 2007 to November 2008: 13% average decline for condos, 22% average decline for townhouses, and a 19% decline for single family houses (\$483,600 average sold price for all three residential categories). The County acknowledges that their mass appraisal formula for computing assessed values has a diluted effect compared to recent sale values.

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