



BARCROFT NEWS

JANUARY, 1988

JANUARY MEETING: WHY DO WE NEED GYPSY MOTH SPRAYING IN BARCROFT THIS YEAR?

Our January meeting will be held on the 7th--always the first Thursday of the month--and will feature a visit by James Bartalon, the Arlington County Gypsy Moth coordinator. The County Staff has counted dormant gypsy moth egg masses in Barcroft up to 3,000 per acre. When those egg masses hatch in the spring we may find our trees entirely denuded of leaves. The affected area is bounded by Arlington Boulevard, Taylor Street, 7th Street S. and Abingdon. Gypsy moths have just "exploded" in Arlington Forest.

Mr. Bartalon will tell us about the County's plans to attack the gypsy moths in Barcroft this spring, and the options residents can request. He will also tell us how the County staff arrived at their recommendation to use aerial sprays on most of our neighborhood, and what we could expect if our trees are not sprayed. Finally, he will describe the types of sprays the County uses, and present evidence of their safety for humans and pets. He will also have sample egg masses to show you what to look for right now. If you have children, pets or trees this could be an interesting meeting.

GYPSY MOTHS: WHAT TO DO UNTIL THE COUNTY "BUG MAN" COMES

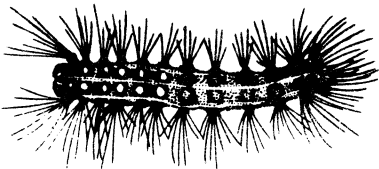
The gypsy moth winters in an egg case which looks like a fuzzy, tan lump about 3/4 to 1/2 inches long. The egg cases are attached to tree trunks, the underside of branches, stone walls, fences, house eaves, woodpiles, etc. They can come on a Christmas tree, or on a car, trailer or boat, especially if it comes from the Northeast region. In the spring this egg mass will hatch 800 to 1000 eggs. The strategy is to get them now before they can hatch.

Hunt for egg cases now. Pry or scrape them off and put them in a plastic bag. They are not easy to kill. Stomping them in the ground will not do the trick. The county recommends that you kill them by soaking in chlorox. Alcohol or ammonia will also work, or you can burn them in your fireplace.

See how many egg masses you can find on your property before the January 7 meeting.

NAMES LEFT OUT OF LAST MONTH'S LIST!

Ouch. We left at least two names out of last month's list of block captains for the Neighborhood Conservation Plan Questionnaires. Please let Sue Sarcone (920-8131) know who you were. We really wanted to recognize all of you for your contribution to the neighborhood. Also, anyone who wanted to be on a committee but is not on one now, please call Sue.





A word from the Public Works Dept.

SIDEWALK SNOW SHOVELING

Sidewalks are important pedestrian walkways, and clearing snow from them is essential for pedestrian safety. Back injuries and broken limbs can result from falling on slippery sidewalks.

Sidewalk snow shoveling is a key element of the spirit of people-helping-people during snowstorms. The Arlington County Department of Public Works appreciates your help. And so do many pedestrians--whether they are customers, the elderly or disabled, employees, neighbors, people walking to Metro stops, or children playing--who will tread more safely on your sidewalks. THANK YOU!

* * * * *

The Public Works people have a point. On our Neighborhood Conservation Plan questionnaire, the lack of sidewalk snow shoveling was one of the biggest complaints. (We hope the Unitarian Church will take note--they clear their parking lot carefully but leave snow on the sidewalks some of us use to get to the bus stop at George Mason.) If you know someone who is elderly, has a back problem, is sick or out of town, why not pitch in and clear a stripe down their walk. It's good exercise and leaves you feeling you have contributed something to your neighborhood.

AND WHERE IS THAT SNOW SCULPTOR, ANYWAY?

If you have not yet checked out one of Curtiss Werner's snow sculptures after a big snow, you can find them on First Street South at the corner of Utah. They sometimes last a long time after the snow. If everyone shovels their sidewalks you can take a walk up there to see the next one.

ARLINGTON HALL PLANS UNDER WAY

The Army still plans to vacate Arlington Hall in 1989, and the State Department has contracted with the firm of VVKR in Alexandria to produce a design for the Foreign Service Institute facility which will take over part of the site. (The rest will be a new National Guard building.)

At the State Department's request, Pat Roach, Pope Woodard and Randy Swart met with the architects in mid-December to inform them of the concerns voiced by Barcroft residents during the County's earlier consideration of plans for the site.

The design process is just beginning, and it was a good point for neighborhood input. Pat and Pope, along with Anne Noll and several other Barcroftians, are part of the committee established to work with the State Department, and will be following up to ensure that Barcroft's input is taken into account in the final designs.

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CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR BARCROFT SCHOOL

A recent School Board-sponsored survey of school facilities has recommended \$658,950 in improvements for Barcroft School. The school system is implementing a Capital Improvements Program based on a study done in 1987.

The addition of a preparing kitchen for on-site lunch service and two new classrooms at a projected cost of \$275,000 is the largest proposed item. Window and wall panel replacement, with coverage of existing skylights and celestories, would run nearly \$93,000. Updating the air conditioning, heating and electrical systems would represent over \$175,000. Grounds improvements, including sidewalk, asphalt repair and landscaping, will cost over \$25,000.

Barcroft School, which was originally located in our Community House, moved to its present site at 625 S. Wakefield in 1924. Additions and renovations occurred in 1943, 1946, 1953, and 1975. This year two portable classrooms were installed as a temporary solution to a growing school population.

In the recent study Barcroft School's projected improvement costs were in the lower to average range among the County's elementary schools. Glebe Elementary, a newer building, had the lowest projected costs at \$338,300. Recommended improvements for Drew Model School totaled \$1,941,000.


For more information on Barcroft School's capital improvement plan call the school office at 553-2333.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY REQUESTS DONATIONS OF ANTIQUES FOR ITS FEBRUARY AUCTION


That's right folks. The Historical Society will hold an antiques auction in February to raise money for the work of the Society, and needs donations of the old antiques people are tired of. This is not a yard sale or a white elephant sale. It is to be a true antiques and collectibles auction. The Society requests "items that will be treasured." If you have an antique or collectible you wish to donate, call Martha or Don Orth at 525-8295.

NEWSLETTER STAFF	
<u>Advertising Manager:</u>	Talmadge Williams 920-7006
<u>Contributions Editor:</u>	Susan Sarcone 920-8131
<u>Editor:</u>	Randy Swart 521-2080
<u>Around the Neighborhood:</u>	Kathy Kerr 892-6458
<u>Mailing:</u>	Aileen & Paul Woods





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MORE ABOUT ARLINGTON'S STREET NAMES -- WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

This month we mostly quote from the County's brochure on Arlington's street-naming system:

In history-gilded Arlington, reading an Arlington street map is like an historical tour. Arlington's 520 streets present a pageant of history.

MUSIC - Key Boulevard and Key Bridge were named for Frances Scott Key, author of the Star Spangled Banner.
SCENE - Charming landmarks recall the land's natural beauty: Rock Spring, Carlin Springs, Little Falls, Four Mile Run. **PEOPLE** - Indian-origin street names include Potomac, Powhatan, Pocomoke, Tuckahoe, Tacoma, Kennebec, Kennesaw and Ottawa. Pioneer family names adorn many street-name signs: Ball, Roberts, Dittmar, Marcey, Veitch, and Lorcom (for Dr. J. T. Johnson's two sons, LOren and BasCOM.) Famous names abound: Barton, Custis, Marshall, Harvard, Longfellow.

COLONIAL MEMORIES - Williamsburg Boulevard memorializes the colonial capital. Fairfax Drive is named for Lord Fairfax. **SOUTHERN ELEGANCE** - Gracious plantation and estate names: **Arlington, Wakefield, Abingdon, Kenmore.** Vacation Lane was a popular street for summer-retreat homes for Washington families.

ROMANCE - Romance and commerce blend in Rolfe and Powhatan Streets. John Rolfe discovered how to cure tobacco and he also married Pocahontas, daughter of the famous indian chief, Powhatan.
ADVENTURE - Columbus and Pearly Streets.
FAITH - Old-time religion gave Glebe Road its name; a glebe was a rectory on farmland for a Church of England minister. **PROGRESS** - Edison Street honors the great American inventor, and Walter Reed Drive honors the Army surgeon whose research conquered yellow fever. Shirley Highway, Virginia's first limited access highway, was named in 1942 for Highway Commissioner Henry G. Shirley, internationally recognized master roadbuilder. **WAR & PEACE** - Many street names commemorate war stories: Liberty, Fort Myer, Fort Scott, Lee, Pershing, Rixey, Yorktown, Richmond.

POLITICS - Statesmen are remembered on many corners: Bryan, Randolph, **George Mason**, Dinwiddie, Franklin, Hamilton, Hancock. Jefferson Davis Highway commemorates the Confederate President. And the names of 23 U.S. presidents through Woodrow Wilson dignify numerous street-name signs (including **Taylor** and **Buchanan** Streets in Barcroft). That is, all but Chester A. Arthur, James K. Polk, and John Tyler. An oversight? Or just politics? **STATES** - Eleven states are represented, from Arizona to **Utah** to Wyoming.

Barcroft's streets had different names before the 1934 renaming. Pershing Drive was Arlington Avenue, Arlington Boulevard was Lee Highway, and all the numbered streets had names like Corbett Street instead of numbers. Only Columbia Pike remained unchanged. If you are interested, the central library has a map in the Virginiana Collection with the old names on it. You can come to the next meeting of the History Committee there at the Library to see the map.



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RADON: IS IT A PROBLEM IN BARCROFT?

by Tom Floyd

Take heart, brother and sister Barcroftians, we may NOT be in danger from RADON, at least in our own dwellings. This is encouraging news, when nearly every day brings us new stories about something -- food, air, "fun" -- that may be harmful to our health.

If you don't already know about radon, it's the latest announced danger to our health -- a type of indoor pollution. Scarcely suspected a few years ago, radon is now recognized as a potentially serious danger to many Americans.

Radon is a colorless, odorless gas which is a natural component of the air in most soils. It is constantly formed by the radioactive decay of minute amounts of uranium in the soil. Radon seeps into homes in various ways, such as through basement walls, and then attaches itself to the dust particles we inhale. Inside our lungs, the smaller dust particles do their insidious work that can lead to cancer. Breathing indoor air contaminated by high levels of radon can be as dangerous as smoking cigarettes.

The Washington area has one of the higher concentrations of radon in the U. S. The good news is that Barcroft's soils are probably not producing high levels of radon that can endanger us. One of the outstanding radon research projects in the nation is being conducted by our own George Mason University. Professor Douglas Mose of GMU's Geology Department is leading this study. We know of at least three Barcroft residents among the 1500 homes in the Northern Virginia area that are participating in the GMU study.

Results thus far for the three Barcroft homes reveal that all have some indoor pollution from radon, but at low levels. Fortunately, the levels found are significantly below what the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

calls the "action level" at which a homeowner should start to do something to reduce the radon level. The action level is 4 picocuries per liter of air, while the three Barcroft homes have levels below 2 picocuries.

If you would like to enter your own home as a volunteer participant in the GMU Soil Radon Project you should call or write Dr. Douglas Mose, Geology Department, GMU, Fairfax, VA 22030. There is a charge of \$100 to support the costs of Dr. Mose's work. The results are kept in the strictest confidence, and known only to the homeowner. There are other testing services available as well, including at least one whose detectors are sold through Hechingers for about \$25. If you have your home tested, please report the results to the Barcroft News so we can all benefit.

Something can be done to correct or reduce the problem if you learn that your home's radon levels are too high. Action will not necessarily cost you an arm and a leg. But caution! Find out whether you have a radon problem before you hire someone at high cost to "fix your radon problem." Watch out for unscrupulous individuals who want to take advantage of the new fear of radon. There doesn't appear to be a big hurry if you live in Barcroft. Take enough time to have GMU or a reputable company measure the radon levels in your home. You can also call or write EPA to request pamphlets on radon. One titled "A Citizen's Guide to Radon: What It Is And What To Do About It" is sold for \$1 at GPO bookstores like the one at Vermont Avenue and H Street NW in DC.

The GMU study will continue for a year. We will report again as testing continues in the three homes we know of or more homeowners report results of their own radon tests to Tom Floyd (892-6216).



JANUARY EVENTS



- Sundays "Arlington County Line" radio show with topics of interest to Arlington. WMZQ radio (AM 1390). 9 to 9:30 AM Sundays.
- Saturdays & Sundays Nature Films. Long Branch Nature Center. 625 S. Carlin Springs Rd (Four Mile Run) 2:00 PM. Free. Info 845-7640.
- Friday 1st Arlington County Board - Organizational Meeting. An old New Year's tradition. 11 AM at the Courthouse. 558-2261.
- Wednesday 6th Bird Walk. No reservation needed. 9:30AM Long Branch Nature Center (Four Mile Run) 625 S. Carlin Springs Rd. 845-7640.

Jan 7 **BARCROFT SCHOOL AND CIVIC LEAGUE 7:30 PM. Why We Spray.**
FIRST Jamie Bartalon of Arlington County Extension Office will
THURS. explain why they think Barcroft should be sprayed for
OF THE gypsy moths this spring, and what sprays they will be
MONTH using. For info please call 920-8131.

- Saturday 9th & 23rd Arlington County Board Meeting. 9 AM at the Courthouse. Watch it on Arlington cable TV. Info 558-2261.
- Monday 25th Book Discussion Group. We read a book and then discuss the ideas in it. Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St. 7:30 PM. Call Doré Morse at 524-8662 for info.

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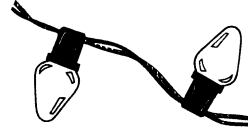
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CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
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As the memory of the Energy Crisis fades the folks of Barcroft are going back to an old tradition -- Christmas lights. The new ones are smaller, and use less electricity, so maybe we are not being too wasteful. And the lights are cheery on a dark winter night.

At press time, early in the month, there were already some pretty spectacular displays lit up. Across the street from us on 4th Street S. (I always put down S. 4th Street, but the editor changes it to 4th Street S.!) there are lights outlining the house, bushes, retaining wall and nearly everything else. Around the corner on Abingdon are some pretty displays too, including the Most Decorated Block -- the 400 block of South Abingdon. Every house on that block has lights.

The Bah Humbug goes to the little cul-de-sac on the 600 block of Woodstock. I didn't see any lights at all there, but at least one house does have its Christmas tree in the front window. They save energy on Woodstock. And who knows, a little closer to Christmas they may blossom out in lights.

Some of the displays reach great heights. Two houses on 1st Street S. have strings of lights soaring into the tops of their trees. Higher still is the house on 6th Street S. at Stafford, where a giant cedar is lit to its peak.

Some of the smaller displays are really cute and very tasteful. On 7th Street S. there is a wreath in a front window beautifully done in bright circles of lights. It is the only one in Barcroft. At the corner of 9th Street S. and Taylor there is a large brick house with a bright candle in every window.

It gave me a lift to see that our new neighbors on Pershing Court (née "Hidden Oaks") also have decided to decorate. Almost every one of the new townhomes has candles in all the front windows. The cheery effect is like something right out of Charles Dickens.

A little further away you will find lots of unique lights in Arlington. The artist who owns the house on Washington Boulevard between Pershing Drive and 10th Street N. has a display you will have to see to believe. He has lights, figures, trees, greens, the works. And in Arlington Heights neighborhood there is a moog synthesizer on the porch of a house on Irving Street at the corner of 7th Street S. that is playing its 5,280th Silent Night of the season as you read this.

When I was growing up we used to hop in the car on a frosty night during the Christmas season and drive around town to look at the Christmas lights. Then OPEC put a stop to that for a while. It's good to see the lights coming back again, and to drive our kids around our neighborhood this year to show them what Christmas lights are like.

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