

April 2010

# Barcroft News

Vol 107, Issue 8

By *Bryant Monroe*

**Captain Michelle R. Nuneville** (Commander Arlington County Police Department Operations Division - District 3) will join us **at the Thursday, April 1 BSCL meeting, 7 PM at the Community House.** This continues a popular Barcroft tradition with **Capt. Nuneville** and her staff sharing data about crime statistics in Barcroft and offering crime prevention tips that are geared to the crimes reported in our neighborhood.

**Capt. Nuneville** will also be able to answer questions about the upcoming County budget cuts. The police department's budget recommendation is to reduce the number of community policing teams by half. This would mean that the three community policing teams would be reduced down to one —with one Captain and a handful of officers to oversee the entire County. Capt. Nuneville says: "Quality of life and crime issues would be addressed primarily during routine calls for service and not by the team. Community meetings and special community events would be greatly reduced as far as police presence is concerned." By the time this article appears the County



Board will have conducted several meetings seeking citizen input on the budget. I will ask the BSCL for a resolution that supports maintaining the community policing and the three district teams into the future.

Thanks to **Heidi Wicker** for taking the lead and getting **the Traffic Committee** up and running. In addition to Heidi, there are two committee members, with room for other Barcrofters interested in parking and traffic issues in our neighborhood.

Issues on the table include **permit parking related to the State Department taking back the Arlington Hall lot**, and National Guard folks parking in the neighborhood. County staff tell us said they have gotten a lot of calls on this problem. **Heidi** has offered her help if anyone is interested in obtaining permit parking or has a complaint.

Finally, the **Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO)** has hired a new **Executive Director, Takis Karantonis**. His zeal and skills that should serve the Pike well. Thanks again to Barcroft's own **Pam Holcomb** who has lead CPRO as the search and hiring process was conducted. CPRO and the Barcroft community is fortunate to have her leadership and dedication.

**Barcroft News Staff**

*Editor & Neighborhood News* Kathy Kerr, 892-6458  
editor@bscl.org

*Publisher / Mailing* Linda Webb  
linda@bscl.org  
703-969-6373

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

**News Deadline:** 15th day of the month preceding the issue month.

**BSCL Officers for 2009—2010**

*President* Bryant Monroe, 271-0944  
Bryant@bscl.org

*Vice President* Steve Wilson  
Steve@bscl.org

*Recording Secy.* Jennifer Lis  
Jennifer@bscl.org

*Treasurer* Gary Lefebvre, 521-0184  
Gary@bscl.org

*Corres. Secy.* Wes Stien  
Wes@bscl.org

*Membership Secy.* Peg Lefebvre, 521-0184  
Peg@bscl.org

*Board Members* Jim Kerr, David Michaelson  
Mike Behringer, Pat Williamson

**Contacts and Committees**

*Community House Facility Mgr.* Christine Scullion  
clscullion@yahoo.com

*Restoration Fundraising Landscaping Traffic Committee Parade Columbia Pike* David Michaelson  
JoAnne Barnhart, 920-0821  
Scott Brinitzer, 892-0308  
Heidi Wicker  
Andrew Hunter, 979-8247  
Bryant Monroe, 271-0944  
Bryant@bscl.org  
Darlene Mickey  
**vacant**  
Shelley Fichtner, 486-0856  
Shelley@bscl.org  
Shirley Gay  
**vacant**

*Parking Committee Volunteers* **vacant**  
Volunteers@bscl.org

*Web Master & NCAC Rep* Randy Swart, 521-2080  
randy@bscl.org

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**For Sale:** HOT TUB COVER, 81" X 81", one year old , never used.I paid \$400. Sell for \$275. Call Dave Peacefull @ 979-8287

**Alexandra's Babysitting** - teen available week nights and weekends. Alexandra @ 703-892-6712

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**Babysitter** - 10th grader available after school and weekends. Please call Jenna at 703-685-1071

**Teenage Babysitter** - Week nights and weekends: Sarah @ 703-521-8756

**Babysitter:** Red Cross certified 10th grader available. Call Abby at 703-892-1090

**Babysitter** --6th grader , Red Cross certified. Jenny Claire 703-998-8338

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

**Yard Work:** Teen available for mowing, raking and other yard work. Call Thomas at 703-979-5838

**Babysitter:** 16 year old for evenings and weekends. Call Allison 703-979-5838

**Mother's Helper/ Babysitting** 16 year old CPR certified girl, responsible, great with kids. Daily after 3:30 PM and weekends. Call Christy at (703)-300-1989

**Ongoing Need:** Baby items, books, educational toys, household items etc for the Even Start Program at Barcroft School. Call Jenny Lindenauer at 703-228-8846 or email: jennifer\_lindenauer@apsva.us

**The Barcroft Community Playgroup** 9:30-11:30am Friday mornings at the Community House. Contact Jenny Ditta [chrisnjenny4@comcast.net](mailto:chrisnjenny4@comcast.net) or Julie Smith [jds342000@gmail.com](mailto:jds342000@gmail.com) or just stop by!

## **Community House Renovation FINAL PHASE!**

The Community House has been changed and improved over the years. For example, when it was built in 1907, there was no electricity and there was an outhouse out back!

In 1997, after 2 years of careful planning, the first of three phases of a huge renovation was begun. The furnace was replaced and relocated from the kitchen to the attic. We got air conditioning, all new electrical service, new walls and floor for the kitchen, a new back wall for the main room, and nasty bathrooms in basement were replaced with the current handicap-accessible restroom.

The second phase in 2000 included the new wood floor installed by a group of volunteers. In 2002 the handicap ramp was installed.

**Currently, the last phase is about to begin.** The plan is to redo the main hall. The current ceiling board has deteriorated and warped. It will be removed, exposing the original higher, beadboard ceiling. The particle board walls above the wainscoting will be replaced with drywall. The meager insulation will be replaced making the building much more energy efficient. New light fixtures and possibly fans will be installed and the whole room will be given a fresh coat of paint.

How much of this we can complete will depend on how much money we have. Amazingly, we already have funds for most of the work but are soliciting our neighbors to donate what you can to ensure the renovations can be completed. Make checks out to: "Barcroft Community House Fund" and drop it off at the Community House or mail to our treasurer, **Gary Lefebvre**, 812 S. George Mason Dr. All donations over the membership fee are fully tax-deductible.

Memberships are \$5 per adult. Is your membership up-to-date? Visit [www.bscl.org/members.htm](http://www.bscl.org/members.htm) for the current membership list. There is also a link there for the membership form

### **8rd<sup>nd</sup> Annual FAUX SHOW OPEN HOUSE AND SALE**

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## Around the Neighborhood

### BABYSITTING CO-OPS

It started with neighbors discussing a common need. Some time without the children—to clean my house, for a dentist appointment, to volunteer at the older child's school, for an overdue date night - anything. The idea is as old as parenthood (I'll watch your children one day, you watch my mine the next). The form, here in Barcroft, is somewhat Washingtonian. Let's keep track of the time. Let's form a coalition. Let's adopt some by-laws. Let's choose officers. So began the two thriving Babysitting Co-ops in Barcroft.

The first babysitting co-op, South Arlington Family Exchange, was started in 1972 when most of its current parent members were just learning to walk. It started with just four families in Barcroft. Today it is 15 strong including families in Barcroft and Alcova Heights. The co-op follows many of the rules that were modified from a 1972 edition of Redbook magazine. Handwritten notes document the founding members and the group's design. There is a rotating secretary who helps track the babysitting hours and a rotating president who works with new members and facilitates the quarterly meetings and social events.

So many neighbors wanted to be part of this sought after group that a waiting list was started. In 2000, there were enough families on the waiting list to start a co-op of their own. That is exactly what they did. The Barcroft Babysitting Co-op was born. With a similar structure, the group meets monthly to share toys for the children; spreadsheet tallies of babysitting hours for the adults along with cof-

fee. After the babysitting requests for the month are filled, the conversation moves to co-op social events. These events have changed as the families in the co-op have grown older. Service projects, such as stream clean ups, are planned to involve the upper end of the age range. There is also a budding book club for both both younger (think Mo Willems) and older (think E. B. White) sets. During the holidays, the group picks a philanthropy. In the past, care packages for families at the Demeter House were assembled. Last year the group adopted a Barcroft Elementary family who had recently survived a fire.

What started out as convenient, inexpensive childcare has become so much more for the neighbors involved in these co-ops. There is nothing in the by-laws about the sense of community this bond has provided for both the parents and the children involved. The parents feel they have raised their children together sharing concerns and advice as much as babysitting hours. The children think of the others in the group as sort of an extended Barcroft family. The annual events have become family traditions.

With all this, the list of neighbors you can call when you need to run out for an hour, seems almost secondary.

*The current president of South Arlington Family Exchange is Susan Bartow. The current president of the Barcroft Babysitting Co-op is Paula Levin-Alcorn.*



## Barcroft Elementary

**Thursday, April 8** 12:45 – 2:15 .p.m. Barcroft will hold an **Open House** for interested neighbors and parents of prospective Kindergarten students to tour the school, meet the **Principal, Mrs. Miriam Hughey-Guy**, and see the school in action. Barcroft is home to **The Leonardo da Vinci Project**, and all year. students participate in a variety of activities designed to enhance critical thinking, imagination, creativity, inventiveness, and problem-solving.

**April 15**, students will commemorate **Leonardo da Vinci's Birthday** with a special celebration of the creative genius that exemplified da Vinci's career as an artist, inventor, and scientist.

**Saturday, April 17 Garden Day.** Daffodils, hyacinth, and tulips should be in full bloom, and all of the gardens on school grounds will get a nice cleaning and spruce-up. Work in the garden will be followed by a pizza lunch.

**April 22 is Earth Day.** The PTA sponsor **Waste-Free Lunch Day** where students learn ways to minimize and eliminate lunchtime trash through the school's Reduce, Reuse and Recycle program. That evening is **Science Night**. Attendees will participate in math and science-related activities that celebrate Earth Day themes such as conservation, stewardship, and recycling.

**Friday, April 23** Barcroft families will have a chance to thank the wonderful staff at Barcroft Elementary with a special **Administrative Assistant Day** celebration. Parent volunteers will handle the phones and other office activities as the office staff enjoy a special party hosted by our Principal, **Mrs. Hughey-Guy**.

## Kenmore Middle School

April 8 at 7:30pm the School Band will join the professional musicians of the **US Army Band** for a concert in the Auditorium.

**Silent Auction** April 9 6:30-9:30 pm. Chorus and music students will perform. Over 230 fabulous items available including hotel and restaurant gift certificates, sporting, theater, museum tickets, passes to Walt Disney World, wine tasting, jewelry, home made crafts, and much more!

April 23 - Kenmore Band Program celebrates Jazz Appreciation Month with the 2nd annual **Jazz Dance Benefit**. Featuring Kenmore's own Big Kickin' Jazz Band, the evening event features music, dancing and dessert - for grown-ups only! Special guests include W-L's Jazz Big Band and musicians from the local jazz scene. Tickets \$25. For more info, contact Barcrofter and Kenmore parent Theresa Schweser at [tschweser@gmail.com](mailto:tschweser@gmail.com) or 703-271-6221.

Kenmore students have studied and performed in partnership with the **Bowen McAuley Dance Theater** for several years including working with people with Parkinson's Disease. A joint performance with Kenmore students will be Saturday April 17 from 2-5 pm in the Auditorium. The "Move Me Arts Experience," is family-friendly. For more info, visit [www.bmdc.org](http://www.bmdc.org).

**April 29** -Hear the **Army Blues Band** at 7:30 pm in the Auditorium. It's FREE!

## Care For Our Community House

Whether you are new to Barcroft or if you have lived here for a long time, we all appreciate and love our historic Barcroft Community House (BCH for short). Without considerable attention, monetary donations and elbow grease, the building, which dates back to 1907, could easily have fallen into serious disrepair. The building has been protected, maintained and improved mostly by neighbor volunteers.

**Christine Scullion** is our facilities manager, keeping the calendar of renters, collecting rents, sending out contracts, managing keys and dealing with inquiries. That's a big job.

There is one Barcrofter, **Gary Lefebvre**, who checks the House almost every day. He picks up mail, makes sure the heat and dehumidifier are on and looks around to make sure everything is ok.

We have weekly cleaning service from a woman who is also Gary's cleaning person. Gary, who also serves as the BSCL treasurer, supervises her and takes care of her Social Security paperwork, etc.

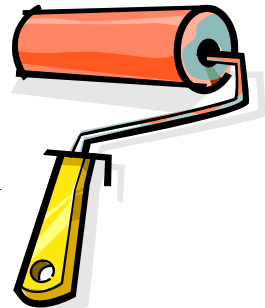
One of our former Board Members, **Scott Briterzer**, is a nationally known landscaper, and has taken on the BHC garden as a memorial to his partner, **Carroll Lettelier, Jr.** who suffered a heart attack and passed away in December, 1998. **Scott**

has done a lot on weekends by himself, and periodically has brought in his crew to work the place over. Volunteers generally rake the leaves in the Fall and mow the grass. A volunteer recently fixed up our picket fence, and then **Jill Herndon**, **Maureen Locke** and **Barbara Swart** painted it. **Jill** also helps a lot with the gardening. **Gary Lefebvre** supervises the company that maintains the irrigation system.

Interior maintenance is mostly volunteer. **Randy Swart** does things like frequent paint touchups, emergency light upkeep, replacing light bulbs, installing and maintaining the automatic exterior lights and minor electrical work or plumbing. We call a plumber for anything really involved, and rarely have an electrician come.

Volunteers have painted the interior and the stage, but we have also had some painting done by professionals. We have Orkin come annually for a termite inspection.

**Jim Kerr** does our scary crawlspace maintenance, including bracing the floor to withstand our Bulgarian dancers and trapping out small critters (using live traps.) **Jim** has also



done a lot of lock and door maintenance, cabinet maintenance in the kitchen and deals with attic squirrels. (There was the time he live-trapped a possum!)

We have a master craftsman in the neighborhood, **Bruce Atkinson**, who is currently rehabilitating our windows with sashes that were reconstructed recently under our last paint contract. Bruce also built the carts for our folding chairs to fit exactly in the space we had available, and was the supervising carpenter for our picket fence. Another neighborhood craftsman, **Mark Trone**, supervised our oak floor installation, using a crew of unskilled volunteers that he trained and then doing the detail work himself. Floor finishing has been done by contract. One of our dance group renters said it was the best floor she has ever danced on.

Exterior maintenance between major paint jobs is mostly done by volunteers. That includes some paint touchup that **Barbara and Randy Swart** do in the worst areas. Major paint jobs are contracted by **David Michaelson**, a contractor who lives in the neighborhood and gets us very good deals because he hammers the sub-contractors and knows what the going rate is for everything you can imagine. **David** has also served as our volunteer contractor for major renovations of the interior. He gets amazing amounts of work done for us at very low prices.

**Gary Lefebvre** maintains the stock of paper products and the “approved tape” for taping things on the walls. (Scotch Magic Tape--it doesn’t take the paint off!) He also keeps cleaning products in stock -- including the ever essential Swiffer floor wipes.

Snow removal for the Community House is by volunteers, with **Mark and Jake Wigfield** in charge. **Randy Swart** takes the County-supplied neighborhood snow-blower over when the snow hits on a work-day.

We occasionally get things done for us by groups that use the building. **The Barcroft Players**, our neighborhood theater troupe, painted the stage and built a storage cubby. The Girl Scouts have promised to do work in return for free rent. **Sue Tenenbaum**, a repeat renter, painted some of the interior to soften the unrelieved white of the walls. Another renter, **Louise Shutler**, donated a much appreciated light dimmer, including its installation, in honor of **Nancy and Paul Rischard**, our Tuesday evening Yoga and Qigong instructors. The dimmer makes yoga sessions more pleasant. Many other renters have appreciated the dimmer.

Many thanks to any and all unsung heroes who have not been mentioned here. As you can see, it takes a neighborhood to maintain and run a Community House!



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## REPLACE LOST TREES WITH FREE COUNTY TREES

Barcroft has lost many of our wonderful large canopy trees due to the recent snow and windstorms and old age. We need more large trees to shade and cool our houses and streets, to clean the air, to absorb storm water runoff, to reduce noise levels, and to provide homes for birds and other wildlife.

To encourage this renewal, Arlington County Parks and Natural Resources Division is once again offering a variety of free tree whips to residents. The tree whips are approximately 3-5 feet tall and are potted in two-gallon containers. Due to limited quantities this year, residents may request only **one tree per household**. Please contact Arlington-Alexandria Tree Stewards **Elizabeth Rives** and/or **Alison Willocks** by April 28 to request your tree. Email [elizabeth\\_rives@hotmail.com](mailto:elizabeth_rives@hotmail.com) or call 703-486-1323. They will be happy to answer any questions you may have about tree selection and placement.

The following large shade trees are being offered. These should be planted at least 20 feet from any overhead wire or building, with consideration for other trees, underground utilities, and sidewalks.

- American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) – This is a large and spreading shade tree with exfoliating white, cream, olive and gray bark. It can get to 80 feet high with a 60-foot spread. It is very adaptable to wet or dry soils and likes full and partial sun. Photos at: [www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/p/plaocc/plaocc1.html](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/p/plaocc/plaocc1.html)
- Swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) – This large shade tree adapts well to dry, wet and flooded areas and it tolerates full sun to partial shade. Leaves are a dark green on top and whitish green underneath, resulting in a bicolor effect in the breeze. It matures at 60 feet tall with a 60-foot spread. It is an excellent provider of food and shelter for wildlife of all kinds. Photos at [www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/q/quebic/quebic1.html](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/q/quebic/quebic1.html)

- River birch (*Betula nigra*) – This is a rapidly growing medium-sized tree with outstanding peeling, salmon-pink ornamental bark that can handle dry or wet sites and full sun to partial sun. It can be single or multiple-trunked. It grows as large as 60 feet tall and 40 feet wide at maturity. Photos at [www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/b/betnig/betnig1.html](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/b/betnig/betnig1.html)

A smaller tree that can be planted closer to overhead wires, but provides less cooling shade and air cleaning assistance, is also available in limited quantities.

- Sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) – An upright small multi-trunked tree, having excellent semi-evergreen waxy foliage, with fragrant creamy late spring flowers. It can mature to 20 feet tall by 15 feet wide. It prefers partial sun in moist, rich, acidic soils for best performance, but can adapt to sunny or shady conditions in a variety of soils. Photo at: [www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/m/magvir/magvir1.html](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/m/magvir/magvir1.html)



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**It's never too late to renew your BSCL membership - or join if you are not yet a member. Dues are just \$5 per adult. Drop off at the Community House or mail to: Gary Lefebvre, BSCL Treasurer 812 S. George Mason Dr.**

**Not sure if you paid this year? Check the list at: [www.bscl.org/members.htm](http://www.bscl.org/members.htm). There is also a link there for the membership form.**



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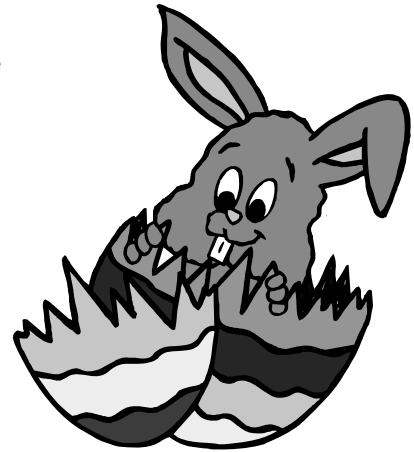


*Barcroft's Annual*  
**Easter Egg Hunt!**  
 Saturday, April 3 10:00 AM

Please join us on for egg hunting and fun at the **BSCL Community House** rain or shine! Coffee will be served and any goodies you'd like to bring will be appreciated!

If you look carefully, you may spot a special visitor hopping around!

For more information contact Wendy at 703-892-6712.



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### **Northern VA Market Trends**

**2010 has started off well** for the local real estate market so far in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Recent statistics show robust pending sales activity underway during a typically slow time of year. In Northern Virginia a total of 1,006 homes sold in January 2010, a less than one percent increase above January 2009 home sales of 998. Active listings decreased 24% from last year, with 5,735 active listings in 1/09 compared with 7,545 homes available 1/08. The average days on market for homes in January 2010 decreased 38.38% to 61 days, compared with 99 days in January 2009. Sales prices rose with the average sales price in January increased by about 16% from January 2009, to \$437,027, compared with last January's average of \$376,669. The median price of homes sold in Northern Virginia also rose in January to \$364,000, which is an increase of 13.75 % compared with January 2009's median price of \$320,000.

### **FHA Loan Changes**

FHA loans comprise a good percentage of transactions for many buyers with loans up to \$729,750 with 3.5% down payment. Here are some changes: \*\*The upfront mortgage insurance premium increases to 2.25% from 1.75%. \*\*Buyers with credit scores below 580 will need at least a 10% down payment \*\*Seller concessions will be reduced to 3% from 6%.

*There is still time to make the deadline of 4/30/10 to be under contract and use the home buyer tax credit!*

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