

# Lake

FEBRUARY 2007



# Barcroft

## Newsletter

## Elect six LBA Board directors

Vote for six LBA Board candidates at the Annual Meeting, Monday, Feb. 26 at 7:30 p.m. at JEB Stuart High School.

The 2007 candidates are:

- ▶ Carolyn Coldren
- ▶ Ben Cooper
- ▶ Stuart Feldstein
- ▶ Lisa Levine
- ▶ Joe Pisciotta
- ▶ Paula Rothenberg
- ▶ Kimberly Smith
- ▶ Pete Walker
- ▶ Cindy Waters.

For full bios on the candidates, go to [www.lakebarcroft.org](http://www.lakebarcroft.org).



Photo by Don Webb

**Warm winter** — A very cold robin was lured out of the sunny south by the unseasonably warm January weather. See more photos on Pages 12 and 13.

## Taste of the Town fundraiser



Stuart High School's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Taste of the Town and Silent Auction will be Sunday March 11. This is the primary fundraiser for Stuart. Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door.

Diane Weeks of Lakeview Drive and Betsy Washington of Half Moon Circle are busy these days collecting items for the Silent and Live Auctions.

Proceeds go to purchase much needed items that the Fairfax County school system doesn't provide for the teachers and

... more on Page 17

### LBA President's Report

## Annual meeting on Monday, Feb. 26

By Stuart Feldstein

The LBA annual meeting is almost here. Monday, Feb. 26 is the date; 7:30 p.m. is the time. JEB Stuart High School (follow the inside signs) is the place. We will be electing six directors to the Board from a field of nine candidates. Their profiles were published in the January newsletter and was included in the annual meeting packet sent to all residents. If you can't attend, please consider voting by proxy.

In addition to reports from LBA and WID, we have two other interesting items on the meeting agenda. One, we will hear about the exciting goings-on at the new

Glasgow Middle School and, two, there will be a discussion of the Bailey's Crossroads revitalization project. The Bailey's project may ultimately have a significant impact on our community. We want it to be a beneficial one.

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From time to time residents make suggestions as to areas where the Board of Directors might become involved. Some of these suggestions, though well-intentioned, are simply inappropriate or extralegal issues for a property owners' association, e.g., a regulation restricting

... more on Page 4

# Lake Barcroft NEWSLETTER

Published by

LAKE BARCROFT ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Gloria Pearlstein, General Assignment  
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Betsy Washington, Horticulture

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The Lake Barcroft Newsletter is published monthly by the Lake Barcroft Association.

Please submit articles to [ckdonlan@aol.com](mailto:ckdonlan@aol.com) or Barcroft News, c/o 6516 Jay Miller Dr., Falls Church, VA 22041.

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### Advertising Rates

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## Milestones

Our Milestones column is looking for news of our neighbors—honors and awards, graduations, honor rolls, retirements, births and deaths. If you have information for Milestones, please call 703-941-0112 or email [ckdonlan@aol.com](mailto:ckdonlan@aol.com).



Photo by Richard Pearlstein

**Foxes** — Richard Pearlstein had a camera handy last month when these foxes appeared in his backyard on Jay Miller Drive.

*Gloria Pearlstein writes:* Four Lake Barcroft residents were among the 26 JEB Stuart students inducted into the Tri-M Music Honor Society on Jan. 23. They are **Cricket Clayton**, of Lakeview Drive; **Amelia Labak**, of Crosswoods Circle; **Becca Pearlstein**, of Jay Miller Drive; and **Lily Rothenberg**, of Greentree Drive. Continuing members of Tri-M include **Jack Daly**, of Jay Miller Drive; **Caren Lecos**, of Beachway Drive; **Chris Sclafani**, of Lakeview Drive; **Sara Photiadis**, of Waterway Drive; and **Kris Pourzal** and **Stephanie Hoffman**, both of Dockser Terrace. Tri-M is an international honor society recognizing secondary music students for their musical ability, academic excellence, school involvement, and community service.

**Al and Jean Trakowski** of Edgewater Drive recently moved to Green Springs retirement community near Springfield after more than 40 years at Lake Barcroft. Al played an important part in the history of the Lake. He was elected president and chairman of the Lake Barcroft Association (LABARCA)

in the spring of 1969. That autumn the two developers of Lake Barcroft – Barger and Dockser – died within two days of each other. Those two men controlled Barcroft Beach Inc, which owned the five beaches and the lakebed (the state owned the water). Al says the heirs “threatened to sell the Lake and turn it into a commercial entertainment [area].” The decision was made to buy the Lake for the residents. “I had a lot of help,” Al says. The selling price was \$300,000. Each of the 1,000 Lake Barcroft homeowners was asked to give \$300; 75% did. For the remainder, LABARCA took a loan, which was quickly repaid. “In only a few months we were financially solvent, but I had an anxious moment there at the start.” Even with the move to Green Springs, Al and Jean will be visiting Lake Barcroft. Al’s son Fritz and his family live on Lakeview Drive.

*The Washington Post reports:* **F. Sheild McCandlish**, 88, a longtime resident of Lakeview Terrace, died Jan. 6 at the Goodwin House in Alexandria. He had Alzheimer’s disease. Sheild started a

... more on Page 4

# Neighbors

A series of profiles on some of the extraordinary people at the Lake and those who have made Lake Barcroft an extraordinary place to live. If you know someone who should be profiled, please contact Carol Donlan.



2006-2007 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Stuart Feldstein, <i>President</i> .....	703-941-1723
David Goslin, <i>Vice President</i> .....	703-256-1254
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Mark Cavich, <i>Director</i> .....	703-992-7085
Carolyn Coldren, <i>Director</i> .....	703-671-4029
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Mike Stahl, <i>Director</i> .....	703-658-1380
Shirley Timashev, <i>Director</i> .....	703-992-9395
Pete Walker, <i>Director</i> .....	703-354-9693

LBA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

<i>Architectural Review</i>	
Kevin Howe .....	703-941-6325
<i>Community Watch/Security</i>	
Peter Walker .....	703-354-9693
<i>Environmental Quality</i>	
Bill Herz .....	703-256-5533
<i>Finance &amp; Audit</i>	
Gerald Mendenhall .....	703-578-3746
<i>Improvements</i>	
Steve Klein .....	703-642-8745
Charles de Seve (WID) .....	703-998-6050
<i>Legal</i>	
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<i>Membership</i>	
Carolyn Coldren .....	703-671-4029
<i>Publications</i>	
Frank Aukofer .....	703-820-4232
<i>Special Events</i>	
Shirley Timashev .....	703-820-1105
<i>Water Safety &amp; Beach Maintenance</i>	
Mike Stahl .....	703-658-1380

LBA Management Office.....703-941-1927  
 Chris Lawson (Monday-Friday)  
 6425 Lakeview Dr., Falls Church, VA 22041  
 www.lakebarcroft.org  
 Watershed Improvement District.....703-820-1300

## Ida Jervis



Photo by Margie Jervis

Ida Jervis, this time on the other side of the camera.

**HOME STORY:** In the early days of Lake Barcroft, Ida Jervis, now 90, and her late husband, Sydney, planned to buy a home near Beach 4. “When we got to the office to sign the papers,” she recalls, “the man who built and was selling the house told us he had sold it earlier that morning for \$300 more than we had agreed to pay.” The couple later bought a home on Edgewood Drive, where Ida still lives.

**CAREERS:** Ida excelled at two very different careers. “When my children were young, I became a puppeteer to make money for Hadassah. We used to have a carnival for charity every year and the puppet show was a big attraction. Then various people asked me to put on puppet shows for their children’s parties. Then I became the first local puppeteer on TV.” Her star puppet was a clown named “Happy Joe.” Along with the late Jim Henson, the Muppets creator who then lived near Glen Echo Park, Ida also helped to start a puppeteer’s guild. She soon found herself “up to my neck in guild work.”

When her children were older, she says, “I did what I always wanted to do. I became a photojournalist for *Washington Jewish Week* and did work that was published in all the local papers. I mainly wrote about artists and did photography for artists’ catalogs. I had a darkroom in my house and would stay up all night making prints.”

Celebrities she photographed and wrote about include writer Isaac Bashevis Singer and Alma Thomas, a well-known African-American expressionist painter in Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian’s Archives of American Art contain more than 1,000 of her works, and the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington exhibited a collection of her news photos. She was also featured in the book *Jewish Mothers: Strength, Wisdom, and Compassion*. As a volunteer, she took photos for Bailey’s Elementary School and the Lake Barcroft Woman’s Club.

**FAMILY:** Ida’s son, Nelson, lives in Baltimore, works in insurance and is a musician. Daughter Alice Bailes is a nurse-midwife and co-director of Birthcare and Women’s Health, Ltd. in Alexandria. Daughter Margie Taylor is a theater scene artist. Margie, her husband Paul, who is technical director for the Washington Opera Company, and their 7-year-old son, Noah, live with Ida.

**WHAT MAKES LAKE BARCROFT SPECIAL?** “I think it’s the community spirit. I can’t be as active as I used to be in the community. I hurt my knees doing Tai Kwon Do. But I can still be nice to my neighbors, who are very nice to me.”

— Gloria Pearlstein, *Barcroft News Staff*



## Water Safety Supervisor needed to direct activities for summer 2007

The LBA Board is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Water Safety Supervisor (WSS) for the coming summer, 2007. The WSS reports to the Chair of the Beach and Water Safety Committee and has overall responsibility for water safety on the Lake and its beaches during the summer season beginning May 19 and ending on Sept. 3. Duties include recruitment, screening, in-service training, scheduling, and supervision of lifeguards and assistant beach managers; maintenance and procurement of equipment; and enforcement of LBA rules and regulations regarding use of the lake and beaches.

Candidates must have all relevant water safety certifications current through the 2007 season, plus supervisory experience. Salary will be based on experience and qualifications. Qualified applicants should send a cover letter and resume to Lake Manager Christine Lawson, 6425 Lakeview Avenue, Falls Church, Virginia, 22041 or email [lachance3@aol.com](mailto:lachance3@aol.com). For further information about this position, contact Dave Goslin, 703-256-1254 or [dgoslin1@verizon.net](mailto:dgoslin1@verizon.net).

— Dave Goslin, LBA Vice President

## Milestones continued — F. Sheild McCandlish

*From Page 2*

Fairfax City law practice in 1948 with his brother-in-law, Edgar A. Prichard. After a series of mergers, their firm became part of what is now McGuire Woods LLP. Sheild retired in 1987.

He was a former president of the Fairfax Bar Association and a former board member of the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and the Fairfax County Park Authority. According to the Washington Post, he had played a key legal role in securing funding to restore

the Lake after Hurricane Agnes in 1972. In 1998, he and his wife of 63 years, Priscilla Totman McCandlish, moved to Goodwin House.

Other survivors include three children, Barbara McCandlish of Santa Fe, N.M., Margaret Darby of Clifton, Va., and Fairfax Sheild McCandlish III of Williamsburg; a sister, Mary Walton Livingston of Alexandria; and five grandchildren.

## WID Public Meeting, Tues., Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m.

The WID's next Quarterly Public Meeting will be at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 13, at the WID Compound, 3650 Boat Dock Dr. The trustees and staff apologize for delaying the January meeting, but scheduling conflicts relating to holidays, holiday travel and staff illnesses intervened. We hope that this has not inconvenienced anyone.



This meeting will be the last WID public meeting before the April WID Annual Meeting.

— Davis Grant, LBWID Operations Director

## LBA President report

*From Page 1*

the use of leaf blowers. Other suggestions which merit serious consideration may not be acted on because of limitations on time, expertise, money or a combination thereof. Moreover, the LBA Board has historically taken the view that it performs its duties best when residents don't notice that the duties have been performed.

That being said, however, there are certain matters which come along where the Board can be of service to the community without imposing new regulations. Publicizing the need for and providing access to no-phos fertilizer comes to mind as one example. (See story on Page 5.) Recently our LakeLink hosted a conversation about what the community might do cooperatively to advance the environmental advantages of "green" practices. This is a worthy topic for discussion that the Board will likely take up soon.



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Final Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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## A green home and a clear Lake: How do we get there?

By Bill Herz  
*Special to Barcroft News*

Recently several neighbors have contacted me, and I myself have noted neighbors using lawn services that are applying fertilizer and herbicides/pesticides — in the middle of January (or other inappropriate times). I'm being asked, "Why is this happening? Why is the Board allowing this to happen?" I can assure you this is happening so the lawn care company can continue to bill; applying during this time of year doesn't help your lawn, and it can harm the Lake disproportionately. This is because during winter months, up to 80% of nitrogen or phosphorus can be lost to the environment, either through direct evaporation (nitrogenous compounds) or surface runoff, which is more likely with phosphorus.

Best management practices for lawns dictate no chemical applications — fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc. — ANYTIME between December and March. Much or all of the application will be lost to the environment, running off from either wet or frozen soils, and a good deal of it will end up in the Lake.

In a survey of Lake residents, quality of the Lake was a primary concern. In fact, 90% of residents reported that the Lake was a primary reason for settling here.

To back up a bit, Lake Barcroft is a shared resource, literally a treasure, nestled into a suburban environment. Like many other similar lakes, we suffer from nutrient pollution, an excess of nitrogen, phosphorus, carbon, or silica, all of which can drive up nutrient loads. This increase in nutrient loads can cause a situation of low oxygen, which can be harmful to aquatic life, and increase algal growth (green blooms) and bacteria. In the case of a freshwater lake like ours, phosphorus is the main culprit in this regard and the reason why the Watershed Improvement District (WID) sells no-phos fertilizer for use on our lawns. There are many steps you as homeowner and Lake steward can take:



... more on Page 23

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Lake Barcroft Sales From December 1, 2006 - January 31, 2007

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Rambler	3413 Blair Rd.*	\$619,000	\$581,900	\$555,000	\$589,200	-5.8%	3/2.5	046	Dec. 10	72	
	3504 Duff Dr.*	\$679,500	\$629,950	\$610,000	\$612,480	-0.4%	4/3	029	Dec. 4	74	
	6132 Beachway Dr.	\$819,000	\$678,900	\$644,000	\$639,780	0.7%	5/3	052	Nov. 30	249	
	6631 Jay Miller Dr.**	\$739,900	\$709,000	\$695,000	\$664,890	6.1%	4/3	029	Dec. 26	78	
4-Lvl Split	3426 Barger Dr.	\$619,000	\$629,000	\$609,000	n/a	n/a	4/3	031	Dec. 20	46	
	Split Foyer	6126 Beachway Dr.*	\$675,000	\$625,000	\$610,000	\$660,520	-7.6%	4/3	52	Nov. 30	141
	Bi-level	6433 Lakeview Dr.	\$785,000	\$749,900	\$700,000	\$671,970	4.2%	4/2	030	Nov. 24	77
Rambler	3440 Blair Rd.***	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,275,000	\$1,239,330	2.9%	5/4	054	Nov. 19	91	
Split Foyer	6106 Beachway Dr.***	\$1,899,000	\$1,899,000	\$1,899,000	\$1,371,720	38.4%	2/3.5	065	Nov. 9	37	

\* Estate sales \*\* Investor renovation \*\*\* Waterfront properties  
Source: MLS and Fairfax County tax records.  
All real estate companies are included in this list.

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# Stuart Crew Boosters — selling grocery cards and certificates

By Regina Derzon  
*Special to Barcroft News*



Do you shop at Giant Food, Harris Teeter and/or Shoppers? If so, you have an opportunity to support the JEB Stuart Crew Team at no cost to you. Defined as a “club sport,” the Stuart’s Crew (rowing) Team does not receive any financial support from the county or the school. The team and its “booster” club must do all fundraising. The Crew Team receives a percentage of the card’s value and it does not cost the purchaser any extra money.

Here is how it works: You select the store(s) and amount(s) of the cards and/or paper certificates you need from the following vendor denominations:

Store:	Denominations:							
	\$5	\$10	\$15	\$20	\$25	\$50	\$75	\$100
Giant	n/a		n/a				n/a	
Harris Teeter								
Shoppers	n/a						n/a	

To order, send an email to Regina Derzon at [derzon@verizon.net](mailto:derzon@verizon.net) specifying the store(s) and denomination(s) and number(s) of cards/certificates you are requesting. Please provide your telephone number. We will deliver your order in person at a pre-arranged time. You may pre-pay or pay when we deliver the cards to you. All checks should be made payable to “Stuart Crew Boosters.” Unfortunately, we cannot accept credit card payments. You may set up your order to be a one-time, occasional or recurring/standing order. If you have any questions, please contact Regina Derzon, Grocery Card Coordinator, via email or by phone (703-916-0655). Thank you for your support of the JEB Stuart Crew Team. Come out and see us row!



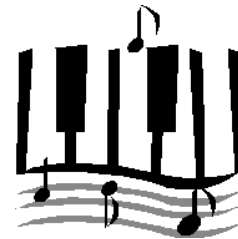
# Newcomers’ Club Chili Cook - Off

The Lake Barcroft Newcomers’ Club Annual Chili Cook-Off will be **Saturday, Feb. 10, from 4 to 7 p.m.** at the home of Kathy and Nolan Stokes 6321 Waterway Dr. Cost is \$8 per person for Newcomers’ Club members; \$10 per person for non-members. Chili entrants will receive complimentary admission for two.

RSVP to Miranda Thomas at [randa777@yahoo.com](mailto:randa777@yahoo.com) or 703-942-5775.

Everyone should bring one of the following to share: a six-pack of interesting beer, cornbread or chips. This is an adult-oriented event.

Chili entries are now closed. Chili should arrive in Crock pots, with serving spoons and any toppings you may need to enhance the flavor. Chili **MUST** be at the Stokes home by 4:30 p.m.



# Music on the Lake

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# Lake Barcroft WOMAN'S CLUB

By Eva Kosztarab and Burma Klein  
Lake Barcroft Woman's Club

## Special Interest Groups are up and running!

Join the *Eating Adventures* group for its first luncheon on Thursday, Feb. 1, at 11:30 a.m. at **Tempo Restaurant**, 4231 Duke St., Alexandria. Contact Jean Stephens at 703-256-0082 if you would like to be part of the group.

Join the *Downtown Attractions* group for a tour of the Hirshhorn Museum on Thursday, March 1, at noon. The museum is located on the National Mall at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Independence Avenue, Washington, D.C. Contact Joann Dale at 703-658-4518 or [joanndale1@yahoo.com](mailto:joanndale1@yahoo.com) for carpool information.

The *Crafts* group is soliciting ideas for projects, as well as for the time and place of meetings. Contact Bonnie Blyth at 703-750-0596 or [bonnie.blyth@us.army.mil](mailto:bonnie.blyth@us.army.mil).

Join the *Movie Adventure* group that plans to meet the second Thursday evening of every month to enjoy a movie together. Their first movie will be on Thursday, Feb. 8 and the next on Thursday, March 8. Members will meet at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Debbie McManis, 6337 Waterway Dr., and will then carpool to the theater. Contact Debbie McManis at [dmcm6337@verizon.net](mailto:dmcm6337@verizon.net) or at 703-941-4048 to be a part of this group.

## Become a member of the Woman's Club for 2006-07 at half price

Enjoy the Special Interest Group activities as well as the upcoming Spring Luncheon by joining the Woman's Club. Dues are only \$15 for the rest of our year. Remember your \$15 dues helps support such annual community activities as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade, the Halloween Parade, the Easter Egg

Hunt, and the Ice Cream Social. Each year we also raise funds for local charities. Please send your check for \$15, made payable to the Lake Barcroft Woman's Club, to Carol Tether at 6400 Lyric Lane, Falls Church, VA, 22044. Call Carol at 703-914-2882 or call Heather Thomas at 703-914-1107 with questions. Your support of our Club is greatly appreciated. Come join the fun!

## First ever Community plant exchange on April 14

The Lake Barcroft Woman's Club Plant Exchange is scheduled for Saturday, April 14, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Lake Barcroft Community Garden. So many hostas — so little space! Share the wealth of your gardens with your neighbors. Try a new species. As you plan your garden for the summer, please cast an eye to what you might like to divide and share at the LBWC plant exchange. We especially welcome native plants. Contact Priscilla Weck at 703-820-0579 for more information.



## Morning Book Club — Friday, Feb. 23

Don't miss a lively meeting at 10 a.m. at the home of Priscilla Weck, 3433 Pinetree Terrace. We will discuss *Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival*, by Velma Wallis. Please drop by. All are welcome. Contact Dorothy Werner at 703-820-0545 with any questions.

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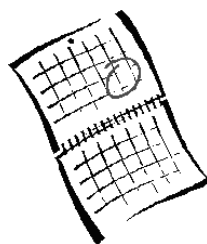
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 was before  
 But none of his questions will be answered  
 Not by the man who handed him the medal  
 Or by the men whose lives may have been saved  
 Perhaps they'll be answered by his mother  
 Who has questions of her own  
 Who wonders how she'll tell her children what their  
 father was like  
 Who wonders how life will go on without him  
 Who wonders how she'll go on without him  
 But she won't get the answers from anyone either.

— Sandy Tugwell



## Lake Barcroft Calendar

Compiled by Ellen Feldstein,  
[EFEditor@cox.net](mailto:EFEditor@cox.net)

- |          |           |   |
|----------|-----------|---|
| Feb. 10  | 4 p.m.    | Newcomers' Club Chili Cook-off<br>6321 Waterway Dr.                                       |
| Feb. 13  | 7:30 p.m. | WID Public Meeting<br>3650 Boat Dock Dr.  |
| Feb. 14  | 7:30 p.m. | LBA Board Meeting<br>6425 Lakeview Dr.  |
| Feb. 23  | 10 a.m.   | Morning Book Club<br>3433 Pinetree Terrace  |
| Feb. 25  | 4 p.m.    | Rusticway Chamber Concert<br>3424 Rusticway Lane  |
| Feb. 26  | 7:30 p.m. | LBA Annual Meeting and<br>Board Elections<br>JEB Stuart High School                       |
| March 4  | 3 p.m.    | Music on the Lake<br>6404 Lakeview Dr.  |
| March 11 | 5 p.m.    | 15 <sup>th</sup> Annual Taste of the Town<br>and Silent Auction<br>JEB Stuart High School |
| March 14 | 7:30 p.m. | LBA Board Meeting<br>6425 Lakeview Dr.  |

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Photo by Mark Cavitch

Ice on a tree provides a remarkable pattern, seen from below the branches.

## A Neighbor's Tale

# Tracking winter blooms in Green Spring Garden Park

By Don Webb  
Special to Barcroft News

The colors of summer reach their peak only to fade away in autumn. As the days grow shorter, winter arrives allowing most plants to sleep and store energy. They can then burst forth in new life and color with the arrival of spring and summer. Some plants like to surprise nature and flower in late winter or very early spring. I thought the extra winter's warmth might fool some of the local plants and went in search of photo opportunities.

Taking camera in hand, I headed out for a walk in near by Green Spring Garden Park to take advantage of our warm early January weather. The short journey provides a great opportunity to view plants in the bright light of a new year. The Fairfax parkland was green and the plant colors mixed.

Entering from the parking lot, I spotted several large groups of *Galanthus nivalis* (Snowdrops). Three white petals grace the slender green stems and spread apart seemingly in search of snow. They don't grow this large in my back yard.

Some helpful park visitors suggested I photograph a large pink flowering tree. After taking several photos, I spoke with a park gardener and learned that the "Peggy Clarke" is a *Prunus mume* (Japanese Apricot/Chinese Plum). The tree produces double-flowering blooms with rose-pink petals and very long stamens. The abundance of stamens was keeping the local bees very busy on this sunny Saturday afternoon. Bees also enjoyed gathering pollen from the *Mahonia beali* (Oregon Grape).

I continued walking the circle border while taking photos. The *Salix* (willow) and *Callicarpa americana* (Beautyberry) were coming into bud. The leaf bare branches were covered with delicate buds and soft colors which stood out against the green and brown background. The Beautyberry normally blooms from June to August.

In the children's garden, near the Cobhouse, fine examples of *Anemone* seedheads and *Sacchurum giganteum* proudly waved feathery tops. A warm breeze made them gently sway and show off against the clouds forming in the bright blue sky.

A large grouping of "Scarlett O'Hara" (Winterberry Holly) had red berry covered branches stretching to touch the sky. The first birds discovering the bright berries would be in for a feast. Nearby were the remains of the *Echinacea purpurea* (cone flower). The bare brown flower heads were stark evidence that visiting goldfinches had eaten well.

After several hours of enjoying the plant eye candy and talking with other visitors, I started to the parking lot. Passing the sun dial, I looked and even it was saying the season was fall, not winter. The sun made me a believer.

---

Don Webb lives on Jay Miller Drive — and loves photography and plants.



Photos by Don Webb

Winter plants in warm weather at Green Springs Farm Park. These blossoms are on a Japanese apricot.



Leaves of this geranium species plant were out and healthy in mid-January.



Winterberries against a warm sky in mid-January.

## Will our tropical winter ruin the buds of Spring?

By Betsy Washington  
*Barcroft News Staff*

What's with this crazy weather! Balmy spring temperatures in the 60s one day followed by the coldest night of the year with temperatures plummeting over 40 degrees in a 24-hour period. This is enough to make normally sane gardeners gnash their teeth and pull out their hair! But what about the plants?

The first half of this winter, Dec. 1 – Jan. 15, was the second warmest on record with temperatures averaging 10 to 20 degrees above normal in many parts of the East. Plants responded to these spring-like temperatures by bursting into bloom weeks and even months ahead of schedule. An entire hillside at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton has been covered with daffodils and snowdrops since mid-December, startling visitors to the winter light show.

Confused Washingtonians have been astonished to see cherry trees with their delicate pink blooms fluttering in the balmy January temps and so-called forsythias blooming in early January. The lovely Christmas and Lenten Roses have also unfurled their silky petals weeks ahead of schedule. Have these plants been tricked by the weather into thinking it is spring? Has Mother Nature really been fooled? And what happens when temperatures drop precipitously as they inevitably do at this time of year?

The precocious cherry trees that have been blooming around the area resemble the spring blooming Yoshino cherry, but are in reality an “everblooming” variety of the Higan Cherry, called “Autumnalis.” These small trees typically bloom sporadically in fall as their name implies, and continue opening a few blooms off and on during mild spells in winter, and amazingly still finish the season with a profuse spring floral show. This year's prolonged warm weather has caused thousands of autumn cherry buds to open all at once creating a mid winter spectacle.

The closely related winter blooming Japanese Flowering Plums, featured in last month's newsletter, have also been in bloom for over a month this winter, fooling the uninitiated into thinking they are cherries. When unseasonably mild temperatures unexpectedly dive into the low 20s as in the past week, exposed flowers and swollen buds ready to open may be frozen and turn brown, but there are typically many more buds held in reserve, ready to bloom during the next mild spell.

Other intrepid plants that have been blooming across the region include Winter Jasmine, a mounding shrub with bright yellow flowers along its stems that cause many people to mistake it for forsythia. As the name implies, winter jasmine blooms during mild spells from January to March, depending

... more on Page 19



A week later, ice covered the Japanese apricot blossoms.



A week later the same geranium species leaves were frozen.



Winterberries covered in ice.

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## Fun to study, hard to live with — the Lake's raccoons

Photo by Traci Cooke



Elizabeth Cooke of Farm Hill Drive, 6 years old and a first grader at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School, has made a class project out of her fascination with the raccoons in her neighborhood.

By Al Cromley  
*Barcroft News Staff*

If you leave food outdoors, any kind, you will sooner or later be visited by furry little animals with bandit faces that fascinate children and eventually become pests.

Lake Barcroft is a haven for raccoons. You are unusual if you have not seen them prowling around your garbage can.

David and Traci Cooke of Farm Hill Drive, have a daughter, Elizabeth, in first grade at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School. Elizabeth has seen so many raccoons they have become her class project. She's been watching them and reporting back to class. One of the visitors' favorite desserts was the grease in the drip pan of their barbecue grill. Says Elizabeth, "They ate and ate the stuff and probably went home with a tummy ache."

"We put a big cinder block on the top of the garbage can to keep them out of it."

Maureen Simonson, Lakeview Drive, said they have seen what looked like the same big raccoon "for years."

"He would go into the garbage can while we watched — a big guy. There was a German shepherd dog next door, fenced off, and he would go crazy when the raccoons came around." She said that raccoons were not spooked when they could see people in the house, inside a sliding door.

Raccoons are from 24 to 46 inches long, nose to tip of tail, weigh maximum 12 to 25 pounds, and seldom live more than

seven years in the wild. They are said to be at least as intelligent as cats and dogs.

Residents should be aware that raccoons, along with foxes, skunks and bats, are wild animal carriers of rabies in the U.S. But only one human death has ever been documented as resulting from a raccoon strain of rabies, according to published reports.

Earl Hodnett, Fairfax County wildlife biologist, said raccoons have toes that are like human fingers. "They have great dexterity, with more nerve endings in the tips of their toes than we have in our fingers."

They are so strong they can get not just into garbage cans but into big trash bins with heavy lids. He said it is a "bad idea" for people to purposely feed raccoons. "They don't need food. You're taking a wild animal and semi-domesticating it."

To him, raccoons are pests that trigger animal control calls all the time, frequently from Lake Barcroft. He said he has seen louverers on the side of houses with raccoon-clawed holes "big enough for a bear to get through." He recommends keeping garbage cans away from the reach of raccoons, in a garage or enclosure.

Daniel and San Juanita Murphy of Greentree Drive see a lot of raccoons. San Juanita said, "They would come from next door, kind of walk by like they were going to dinner and stop at our trash can, not bothered by us at all. A lot of times we found a baby [raccoon] in the can."

She swears she has heard baby raccoons make a noise like a bird.

Julie Agnone of Tollgate Terrace overlooking Beach 1, has seen many animals — raccoons, a possum family following the mother ... and deer. A raccoon got into a chimney with a built-in barbecue, she said. The raccoon was on a grate and was removed by stuffing a rag soaked in paint thinner up the chimney. They don't like the smell, apparently.

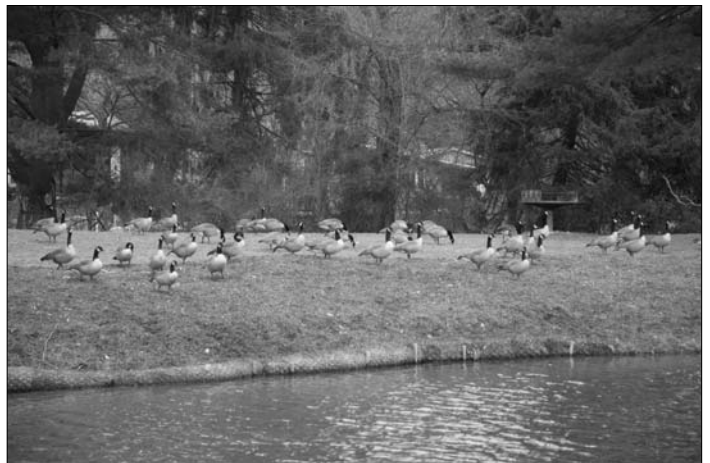


Photo by Tom Donlan

Geese crowd up at the Beach 5 peninsula.

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## JEB Stuart's 15<sup>th</sup> annual Taste of the Town needs your support

From Page 1

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- ▶ Put an ad in the auction catalogue — contact Kim Cook at [kimberlyAcook@aol.com](mailto:kimberlyAcook@aol.com).
- ▶ Attend Taste of the Town on March 11 from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Many Stuart sports teams and clubs will be selling advance tickets to earn money for their teams.
- ▶ And last but definitely not least, donate Auction items. Do you have a green thumb, or a talent for making floral arrangements? Could you help someone landscape a yard or teach how to make a flower arrangement? Are you a good cook? Could you teach a cooking class to kids or adults, or host a cocktail or dinner party at your home or the winning bidder's home?

Do you live on the Lake? Could you offer to entertain another Stuart family on your boat one afternoon or evening? Maybe a 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks cruise? Do you have season tickets to professional or college sporting events, such as the Redskins, Wahoos, or Hokies? Could you donate tickets to a game? Do you have a subscription to the Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap, or another theater? Could you donate tickets to a performance?

**March  
Newsletter  
articles due  
by Feb. 20.**

Do you have a vacation home? Could you donate a weekend so that another family can enjoy a getaway from the city? Do you have an interesting job that might offer a behind-the-scene career perspective to a student? Could you take a student to lunch, talk about what you do each day, and show him or her around your office?

Do any of your friends or relatives own a restaurant, store, or business? Could you ask them if they would like to buy an ad in the TOT catalog or if they would be willing to donate food, an item, or a gift certificate to our event?

Please contact Betsy Washington at [bwash@cox.net](mailto:bwash@cox.net) or Diane Weeks at [diane.weeks@gmail.com](mailto:diane.weeks@gmail.com) for more details or to make a donation.

— Nancy Moy, *Special to Barcroft News*



Photo by Tom Donlan

Joseph Gueron of Lakeview Drive looks over some of the offerings in the Silent Auction last year at the JEB Stuart High School Taste of the Town.

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## What is this warm weather doing to our plants?

From Page 13

on the severity of the winter. Alas, unlike other jasmines, the flowers of winter jasmine are not fragrant.

The small translucent yellow flowers of Fragrant Wintersweet, on the other hand, have been perfuming the air since mid-December. This easygoing shrub is typically one of the earliest winter bloomers, often in flower by the first of the year and continuing for two months or more despite the unpredictability of the winter weather.

Mahonias, or Oregon Grape hollies, have also burst into fragrant bloom. The popular Leatherleaf Mahonia with its evergreen, holly-like leaves, features upright clusters of small, yellow flowers. This Mahonia can bloom as early as January in mild winters or as late as March in cold winters. Several new hybrid Mahonias are even more precocious in our area. Cultivars like "Chastity," "Winter Sun" and "Arthur Menzies" are often in full bloom by Thanksgiving continuing their floral show for several months. Their winter flowers look like golden candelabras atop the shrubs. Some camellias are also bursting into bloom ahead of schedule this winter, especially winter-blooming cultivars like "Spring Promise" with its large rosy blooms. While most camellias wait until late March or April to bloom in our area, this hardy cultivar routinely flaunts its showy blooms in February, despite snow and freezing temperatures.

So has Mother Nature been fooled this year? In most cases the answer is no. These winter blooming plants have evolved to bloom in late winter and early spring in response to mild temperatures and are adapted to the vagaries of winter weather. Many have hundreds of buds that open over a number of weeks during mild winter weather. Even when early flowers are caught by plummeting winter temperatures, as in mid January, and turn to brown mush, there are usually many more tightly closed buds waiting patiently for the next mild spell.

A quick survey of gardens after several nights of temperatures hovering near 20 degrees reveals that the sumptuous blooms of the camellia and the Japanese Flowering Apricot have turned brown and withered, but plump rosy buds hint of future floral shows awaiting the next mild spell.

The flowers of the Mahonias, winter jasmines, and hellebores are untouched, as fresh and pristine as ever. Early bulbs like snowdrops and crocus are equally unfazed. The best advice for the anxious winter gardener is to sit back and enjoy the unseasonable weather while it lasts and let nature take its course.

Gardener-writer Henry Mitchell said it best, "When the gardener loses (as his experience sooner or later forces him to lose) his innocence and sweet dreams about the spring and the daffodil season, he then is able to detect in the real world

of outrageous weather and dashed hopes, the finest display ever seen." (Excerpted from *Henry Mitchell on Gardening*.) So when the winter weather is "both terrible and wonderful all at once," grab one of Mitchell's books, and sit back and despair and laugh with him in the face of winter's unpredictable weather.



Photo by Betsy Washington

Winter flowers — "Spring Promise" Camellia

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# A golfer's dream come true will help Fairfax residents in need

By Carol Tether  
Special to Barcroft News

The Assistance League of Northern Virginia is raffling a trip for two to the final weekend of the Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, Ga. (April 6-8). There will be only 300 tickets issued and each ticket will cost \$100. The winning ticket will be drawn on Feb. 24.

The prize is worth \$8,000 — two passes to the Masters Golf Tournament Finals, 3 nights of hotel accommodations for two; three days of car rental and clubhouse parking, unlimited hospitality privileges at the 1018 Club and \$250 cash toward travel expenses.

The Assistance League promotes literacy in at-risk primary students with member-recorded books on tape for home-based reading. It also supports INOVA Fairfax Hospital's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Clinic, the only one in the Washington metropolitan area, by providing clothes and personal hygiene kits to adults, as well as heart-shaped pillows for young patients to hug during and after their examinations. It also supplies infant layette sets to mothers lacking financial resources, through Fairfax Hospital Women's OB/GYN Clinic.

## TICKET REQUEST

\_\_\_ tickets @ \$100 each Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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I would like to make a tax deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support the Assistance League® of Northern Virginia.

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## Rusticway Chamber Music concert on Sunday, Feb. 25 at 4 p.m.

On Sunday, Feb. 25, the Rusticway Chamber Music Series presents guitar/lutist Carey Harwood and tenor Robert Glaubitz of the Conundrum Duo, based in Colorado, along with local guest soprano Alexandra Normile. We welcome back Rob who, like Alexandra, grew up in Lake Barcroft and the surrounding community.

These young artists will perform a wide range of music for voice, guitar and lute featuring songs of the Renaissance as well as contemporary works, including Morley, Britten and Gershwin. The Conundrum Duo was well-received this past January at

the "Monkey," which presents internationally acclaimed guitarists to New York City audiences.

The hour-long concert will begin at 4 p.m. at the home of Kristin Gilbert and Marion Baker, located at 3424 Rusticway Lane (intersection of Rusticway and Crosswoods Drive). Guests are invited to stay for refreshments and to meet the artists. Requested donations are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children.

For reservations contact: Kristin Gilbert at [KristinGilbert@cox.net](mailto:KristinGilbert@cox.net), 703-354-7305 or Aileen Pisciotta at [a2jpsciotta@aol.com](mailto:a2jpsciotta@aol.com), 703-914-2635.



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## Spring temperatures in winter

From our weather watcher, Lowell L. Koontz on Oakwood Drive. For more information go to Lowell's Web site at <http://www.annandaleweather.com>.

Shorts and shirtsleeves were the proper winter attire on Jan. 6 when the temperature reached 71 humid degrees — the dew point was 63.4 degrees. This wasn't a one-day wonder. The first 16 days of the month were above average. The second half brought us back to earth with near average temperatures.

This is the second consecutive year that January has given us spring temperatures. A year ago we had the warmest January on record.

Total precipitation was 2.7 inches. Snowfall total was 1.8 inches. Highest wind gusts were 37 mph on Jan. 19 and Jan. 20. There were no major storm systems here in January.



Photo by Tom Donlan

The temperature rose back into the 50s for the last Saturday of January, and it was a good day to spend some time at the beach.

## Use no-phos fertilizer on lawns

From Page 5

- ▶ Use the fertilizer sold by the WID when you apply; and apply following the label's instructions. The WID can be reached at 703 820-1300 or [dgrantlbwid@vacoxmail.com](mailto:dgrantlbwid@vacoxmail.com).
- ▶ If you use a lawn and garden company, instruct them to use a no-phos fertilizer. If they look at you like you are from Mars, make them provide documentation that they use such a product, or use a greener service.
- ▶ Never apply fertilizer or home and garden chemicals December through March, or when weather conditions suggest otherwise (before or after heavy rains).

Best of all, if you don't need lawn, replace with native ground cover that doesn't require chemical update.

- ▶ Maintain your turf if you do have it — and that is work when you have a lot of trees. Well maintained grass can

retain a high percentage of what is applied on it.

- ▶ Set up a vegetative buffer zone. This is especially helpful for Lakefront areas (such as the riparian garden being put in at Beach 5), areas with steep pitch into the lake, areas surrounding streams and creeks, and any runoff prone area.
- ▶ Garden with a "less is more" philosophy. Let soil testing dictate when nutrient application is warranted.
- ▶ Avoid harmful detergents and household chemicals whenever possible.
- ▶ Stabilize eroded areas with plantings.

The Lake Barcroft Association Board is developing a more detailed brochure on things you can do to keep your home green — and the Lake clear. Watch for it this Spring. For more information, please contact Bill Herz at [billherz@gmail.com](mailto:billherz@gmail.com).

## SERVICES



**Child care.** 15-year old girl, Lake resident, available some evenings and weekends. Experienced. Knows CPR. loves children and is eager to interact with them. Contact Anjelica, 703-256-8068.

**Custom embroidery & monogramming.** Lake Barcroft resident. Specializing in fleece dog coats, baby items, sports & youth towels, clocks, totes and baseball caps. Coming soon: koozies. Please visit [www.kims-embroidery.com](http://www.kims-embroidery.com). Contact Kim Schloemer, 703-642-0477 or [kims-embroidery@cox.net](mailto:kims-embroidery@cox.net).

**Housecleaning.** Honest, excellent references in Lake Barcroft area. Low rates & free estimates. Juliet/Luis, 703-354-3225 or 703-628-3434.

**Housecleaning.** Lady wants to clean houses from 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. \$65. Help elderly people \$15 per hour. Call 703-379-9219.

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**Knitting classes.** Weekly on Wed. at 7-8:30 p.m. For more info and to sign up, email Debra Lee at [debraknits@yahoo.com](mailto:debraknits@yahoo.com).



**Tables.** Round side table, medium oak. \$20; Tilt top tea table, antique, \$1,500. Please call Lois at 703-931-3982

