



Lake Barcroft

History



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 3650 Boat Dock Drive,  
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 Proceeds will defray printing costs  
 and support local charities.

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**Stuart Finley**, who has been a Barcroft resident since 1954, illustrated this book, primarily by selecting photographs shot by non-Barcroft resident Ted Jones who was a long-time associate of Stu at NBC-Washington and later photographer and editor of an environmental documentary film production company. Ted is recognized as *having an eye* . . . which means that he recognizes a potential picture when he sees one, and being a *grab artist* . . . which means that if someone falls Ted has his picture before he hits the ground.

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 and Robert Finley (photos)

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# Preface

The year 2000 marked the 50th anniversary of Lake Barcroft as a community. In 1999, my wife, Martha, suggested that someone should write a history of the community. When asked who, she said her husband could do it and volunteered me to undertake the project. Therese St. Hilaire, chairperson of the Publications Committee of the Lake Barcroft Association, brought together Jean Vos, Carol Hawley, Ernie Rauth, Stuart Finley, my wife and me to explore the possibilities. The meeting resulted in my commitment to write 12 monthly articles for the *Lake Barcroft Newsletter* during the anniversary year.

A few phone calls to local historical societies led to the Fairfax City Regional Library, formerly known as the Fairfax Central Library. The Virginia Room is a reference center for local historical data and the meeting place for the Fairfax Historical Commission. The room contains a treasure of reference materials including bound copies of the *Lake Barcroft Newsletter* starting in 1960. The *Fairfax Herald* has been indexed and copied to microfilm for the library. This weekly newspaper provides items of historical interest concerning Lake Barcroft until it ceased publishing in 1973. The librarians in the Virginia Room are most helpful and keep a file containing articles on Lake Barcroft.

Jean Vos provided records from the early 50s, which were especially important in researching the beginnings of community action. Her late husband, Dr. Chris Murphy, took an active role in the community and saved documents from those times. Stuart Finley has maintained a wide range of records covering the late 50s to the present. He always produced a file or article pertinent to the subject at hand. I interviewed and called Ernie Rauth on several occasions to tap his extraordinary memory. He has great stories of the past.

Other valuable sources included: George Bates, Ralph Spenser, Matt Cazan, Hildegard Allebaugh, Mary Duff Glowa, Kirk Burns, Bill Lowenthal and Helen O'Rourke-McClary. Chica Brunsvold recounted the saga of the footbridge and provided a comprehensive scrapbook about its construction. Norma Cockrell, Woman's Club historian, lent me several scrapbooks



*August 15, 1965*

going back to the mid-50s. Kay Ward-Johnson sent papers describing the landscaping of the island in 1974. Marjorie Macone described the Book Club and gave me the best line in all the articles. Many others helped to piece together information, especially Stuart Finley who also checked the articles for accuracy.

I would like to acknowledge my family. My wife was never too busy to read and comment on my writing. Our son, Len, spent many hours with me going over text and debating syntax. I am very grateful for his assistance.

Finally, Stuart Finley came up with a plan to make the articles into a book. He put together a group of people and organizations to fund the publication expenses. The "angels" included the Lake Barcroft Woman's Club, Lake Barcroft Association, David Alne, Stuart Finley, Jane and Dick Legault and Therese St.Hilaire. Thank you all.

# Introduction

**A**s a prelude to the 50-year history of the Lake Barcroft community, a portion of the Lake Barcroft Story is reprinted from the *Lake Barcroft Directory*. This is a synopsis of local area history up to 1950. It also contains some background on the person for whom Lake Barcroft is named.

## The Lake Barcroft Story

BARCROFT COMMUNITY was named in memory of a doctor who built his home here and also operated a mill. The man was Dr. John W. Barcroft, originally from New Jersey. In 1849, Dr. Barcroft came to our area and built both a home and a mill on Columbia Pike at Holmes Run near the present dam. He practiced medicine throughout the surrounding community and ran his mill up to the time of the Civil War.

During its retreat from the Battle of Bull Run, the Union Army overran Dr. Barcroft's home. His property was so damaged that he went back North until the end of the war. He then returned to Fairfax County and built a new home on what became known as Barcroft Hill.

Before the time of Dr. Barcroft, our neighborhood was not without some notable history. The original residents were the Doe and Necostin Indians of the Algonquin tribes. (Anacostia derives its name from the Necostins.) Artifacts of these early natives are still occasionally found. Howard Uphoff has uncovered arrowheads on his land at 6308 Lakeview Drive.

Munson Hill Farm was a large tract between what is now Bailey's Crossroads and Seven Corners. It was settled and developed during the early 1700's. Timothy Munson bought the land in 1851 and gave his name to the farm. In the time to come, his name was also applied to a community and a street just north of our lake area. Columbia Pike was constructed as a toll road in 1808, and was then called the Washington Graveled Road.

During the Civil War, both Munson Hill Farm and Bailey's Crossroads were scenes of action. At the beginning of the war Bailey's Crossroads was a Union Army camp. At the same time, the Confederate Army occupied locations at Annandale and Fairfax. Later, federal troops built Fort Buffalo at the present site of Seven Corners, and it became one of the ring of forts protecting the District of Columbia in 1861. At about that time, Bailey's Crossroads was the site of the largest military review ever held anywhere. General McClellan reviewed 75,000 troops, and President Lincoln was among the additional 75,000 spectators who came to watch the Army of the Potomac's vast parade.

It was during this grand review that Julia Ward Howe was inspired to write new words for the music of a song called John Brown's Body. The new song became one of the most stirring anthems of all time, the Battle Hymn of the Republic.

Bailey's Crossroads is named for the Baileys, a circus owning family whose menagerie and shows were merged with those of P. T. Barnum about 1870. The Barnum and Bailey Circus was then billed as, "The Greatest Show on Earth." For many years, Bailey's Crossroads was its winter quarters.

Lake Barcroft came into being in 1915. An increasing need for water by the City of Alexandria led the Alexandria Water Company to build the dam and establish a reservoir to store the waters from the branches of Holmes Run. The North Branch of Holmes Run is now called Tripps Run.

Dam construction was begun in 1913 under contract with the Piedmont Construction Company. Specifications for the Barcroft Dam were severe and the construction was massive. The structure is of cyclopean masonry and concrete. The foundation is laid upon bedrock. A railway was built to transport the masonry stones to the dam site. The contractor went broke completing the job.

The result was a dam 400 feet wide with the spillway at the top 205 feet above mean sea level and 63 feet above the streambed. Behind this dam, there formed a lake of 115 acres and over five miles of shoreline. When full it held nearly 620,000,000 gallons and had an average daily runoff of about 10,000,000 gallons. In 1942, gates were installed at the top of the dam to raise the spillway level five feet. This increased the size of the reservoir to 135 acres and the capacity to about 800,000,000 gallons.

In the late 1940's, the reservoir became too small to serve Alexandria and other water sources replaced its use. In 1950 the reservoir and its surrounding land were put up for sale by the Water Company. There was a movement to turn it into a Fairfax County park, but the Board of Supervisors considered the economics and decided in favor of private development. A partnership of developers from Boston bought the lake and 680 acres of land in the spring of 1950 for about one million dollars.

*Adapted from "Lake Barcroft Origins" by Will Fazar, Lake Barcroft Directory 1967, and "Some Virginia History" by Rex Lauck, Lake Barcroft Directory 1970. Revised, 1974 & 1979, by Myron Birnbaum. Revised, 1992 by William Lowenthal.*

# The Barcroft Dam



In 1913, the Piedmont Construction Company began building the Barcroft Dam by laying railroad tracks in the Holmes Run valley to transport rock for the dam and building a makeshift coffer dam to control stream flow. *(September 13, 1913)*



Lift by lift, the dam began to rise. With a gaping hole in the middle to accommodate the railroad tracks and to pass storm water, the two ends were constructed . . . slim at the far end, but fat in the middle to ensure stability. *(November 2, 1914)*



A rickety looking construction boom located by the railroad tracks unloaded large rocks to face the dam and partially fill its interior. The old quarry is now underwater off 3428 Mansfield Road in the North Area. *(July 2, 1914)*



Before completion, Piedmont Construction Company went broke. This freshet pouring through the incomplected dam illustrates its problems. Somehow, we know not how, the Alexandria Water Company managed to finish construction. *(About 1915)*



Engineers have quibbled whether the Barcroft Dam is a true Cyclopean Masonry structure. These rocks laid on top of concrete waiting for the next pour verify that it indeed does have a Cyclopean mix of rock and concrete. *(November 30, 1913)*



Completed, the Barcroft Dam supplied water to the City of Alexandria. Water company employees released water through underflow pipes. It flowed downstream and was recaptured at Duke Street in Alexandria and stored in a reservoir.



# Fifty Years of Lake Barcroft

## A Chronology of Major Events

- 1950** Colonel Joseph V. Barger and associates purchased Lake Barcroft, a reservoir, from the Alexandria Water Works for \$1 million and started development.
- 1951** The first home was built and occupied by the Oshins family on what is now Stanford Circle.
- 1952** In July, eleven of fifteen homeowners met for the purpose of starting a community association, known from that time as The Lake Barcroft Community Association (LABARCA).
- 1954** Forty homeowners vote approval for LABARCA bylaws thus making the organization official.
- 1955** The Lake Barcroft Woman's Club was founded.
- 1958** There were now 650 homes in Lake Barcroft.
- 1960** The Lake Barcroft Newsletter changed from a mimeographed sheet to a printed and bound publication supported by advertisements.
- 1961** The first major dredging operation commenced and continued for 18 months with expenditures of over \$200,000 shared by Fairfax County and Col. Barger. The excess silt was used to create an island and a peninsula at the Holmes Run end of the lake and a peninsula at Tripps Run.
- 1962** An entity known as a Small Sanitary District was established which taxed Lake Barcroft homeowners for the purpose of dredging and installing curbs and sewers.
- 1964** Many street names were changed, and a new address numbering system effected.
- 1965** Fifteen ladies who had recently moved to Lake Barcroft met and formed the Newcomer's Club.
- 1969** Colonel Barger and his partner, Charles Dockser, passed away giving Lake Barcroft residents the opportunity to purchase the lake.
- 1970** Many Barcroft residents contributed \$300 per household to buy the lake for \$300,000. A new corporation, the Barcroft Lake Management Association (BARLAMA), was established to take over the lake, dam and beaches.
- 1971** The Lake Barcroft Recreation Corporation was incorporated to build a recreation center on Parcel A, a property purchased from the Barger and Dockser estates.
- 1972** Hurricane Agnes washed out an earthen portion of the dam. The lake drained and left a depressing mud hole.
- 1973** The residents voted to establish the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District (LBWID), a self-taxing entity, to raise funds for restoring the dam. Work began on the repairs, and dredging removed silt and debris from the lake bottom. Decanting basins were constructed at the ends of the lake
- 1974** The restored dam, outfitted with an automatic gate, was certified and became operational. By mid-summer the lake was filled.
- 1974** The Lake Barcroft Recreation Center opened.
- 1977** The Lake Barcroft Woman's Club dedicated the footbridge at Homes Run.
- 1992** LABARCA and BARLAMA joined and formed the Lake Barcroft Association (LBA).
- 1995** The Lake Barcroft Woman's Club dedicated the Community Garden commemorating 40 years of service to the community.
- 1999** The Lake Barcroft Foundation was established which includes the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund.
- 2000** The Community Garden waterfall was named for Ernie Rauth in honor of his work on the garden.
- 2000** Lake Barcroft entered the electronic age with the introduction of the Web Site and Listserve, called the Lake Link.

# One Man's Dream

Imagine our community if William Levitt had discovered this area and developed another Levittown—cracker box houses on postage stamp lots. Or, if Robert E. Simon had seen Lake Barcroft before he saw Lake Anne, we could be living in a place called Reston, a planned community with cluster homes, common lands and village centers all designed to look like a European satellite town. Fortunately, Colonel Joseph V. Barger envisioned something else: a unique, rustic enclave only a few miles from the White House.

## Colonel Barger's Quest

Colonel Barger's discovery of Lake Barcroft is a local legend. One long-time resident recalls the Colonel's spirited account of how he flew into National Airport and saw the sun sparkling off Lake Barcroft. He took a cab from the airport to pinpoint its exact location. That was the beginning of his quest. His timing was excellent: construction of new reservoir facilities at Occoquan, Virginia made the lake surplus to the needs of the Alexandria Water Company, which put it up for sale. Some Fairfax County officials wanted to turn the lake property into a park, but the county's Planning Division recommended zoning the property suburban residential with minimum lot sizes of 10,000 square feet. The Board of Supervisors opted for private development, arguing that the county could not afford to forego the tax revenue, which would be acquired as a result of such development. Backed by a group of investors from New England, Barger negotiated the purchase of the 135-acre lake and the surrounding 566 acres of woodlands—all for \$1 million.

Barger named his company Lake Barcroft Estates, Inc., to reflect his vision of a private gated community composed of small country estates. He started the project by subdividing the tract into 1,250 lots, ranging from one-fourth of an acre to a full acre. In a 1950 article in the *Washington Post* headlined "Bulldozers Shatter Lake Barcroft's Calm," Barger expressed his intention to construct roads, sewers and water lines in four months, and then to start building homes. He and his associates had a reputation for integrating

their development plans with the existing natural environment. Barger also wanted Barcroft Estates to have its own police force, several private beaches and, of course, the lake for swimming, boating and fishing. He envisioned 800 homes—some placed on two lots. The individual homes were to be custom-built to the wishes of the lot buyers although plans and specifications were subject to architectural review to protect against sub-standard houses and the use of a repetitive, single design. For all intents and purposes, all homes would be custom-built.

## Walter Gropius

A resourceful entrepreneur, Barger used every means possible to promote his projects. In this case, he called on an acquaintance, internationally renowned architect Walter Gropius, dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Architecture and Design. As a young architect in Germany in the early 1900s, Gropius had been greatly influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright. He went on to develop the Bauhaus style, which took advantage of developing technologies and the advent of mass production to design everything from glass buildings to sterile



The Gropius-designed house at 6325 Lakeview Drive



but efficient housing for the masses. The extent of Gropius' contribution to the architecture of Lake Barcroft Estates is not clear, but his influence on the design of American homes is set forth in Tom Wolfe's book, *From Bauhaus to Our House*. Wolfe castigates the Bauhaus style as being "bare, spare, impersonal and highly abstract architecture" not reflecting the energy and exuberance of the American century.

The article in the *Washington Post* on Lake Barcroft reported that Gropius planned to construct a large nursery for children and to plant azaleas throughout the area to make "the rolling hills a riot of color." He suggested that homes have built-in barbecue pits on the porch to emulate country living. His plan reportedly included designing four moderately priced, three-bedroom, two-bathroom ramblers in four different price ranges. Each house would feature separate areas for sleep, work and play. It would seem that Gropius was prescient in recognizing the need for communal nurseries and, at the same time, aware of the changing culture in the fifties, when a barbecue in the back yard was the rage. However, only one Gropius house—located at 6325 Lakeview Drive—was ever designed and built. It is not clear if the design was actually put to blueprints or if it was merely the result of sketches on a napkin. In any case, the house was expensive at the time and difficult to sell.

## Starting Out

Such were the dreams of the developers and designers of Lake Barcroft Estates as they cleared the land. The beginning was shaky at best. Bailey's Crossroads featured little more than Blackwelders Barbecue and the old Payne Grocery Store. Seven Corners was a primitive one-grade roadway tangle with a perpetual traffic jam. And, there was no Seven Corners Shopping Center. The beltway did not exist; the Tyson's Corner area had only a general store; Route 7 was a winding, two-lane road; and what is now Skyline Plaza was a busy general-aviation airport. Having been a reservoir, Lake Barcroft was preserved in a park-like setting that had no roads to speak of and certainly no easy access. The whole scene took on the appearance of a logging camp: roads carved out of the woods were paved with gravel or a combination of oil and wood chips. The roads were used both to haul trees and to reach the properties Barger hoped to sell. Perhaps Barger saw these roads as a way to preserve the rustic flavor of the project, but at first, it was a real mess. The access problems slowed sales, and some of the more grandiose ideas fell by the wayside.



A grim Colonel Barger listening to Stuart Finley

The first settlers—and it must have seemed like the New West (of Washington, D.C., at least)—broke trails to their home sites. Sales representatives used jeeps to show prospective buyers lots, navigating nonexistent paths through the forest, in what must have been a difficult sell. The very first of the pioneers lived in a tent while their house was being built. The first family to move into their permanent residence also laid claim to being the first residents of Lake Barcroft. For the new homesteaders it was a very rustic and challenging life in a wooded paradise so near to and yet so far from the nation's capital.

As the number of residents grew, leaders, followers and dissidents emerged. Activists and organizations would come together to set the community's course for the next fifty years. Barger worked with these people and—despite all the growing pains and despite being a shrewd businessman not given to ethereal thoughts—the Colonel said that being in Lake Barcroft was "like being in heaven. It's just a glorious spot."

# From Vision To Reality

The development of Lake Barcroft Estates began not too long after the Second World War, when lives, careers and educations had been seriously disrupted for four long years. Americans were struggling to regain their footing and to start over. Colonel Joseph Barger was commencing a major land development at a time when money was in short supply. Washington, D.C., lacked an industrial base; citizens of major U.S. cities considered the nation's capital to be a provincial, sleepy southern town. Homebuyers were naturally cautious.

## The Founders

Barger, vice president and later president and director of Lake Barcroft Estates, Inc., was in charge of project operations. It was his job to turn his dream into reality. He laid out plans and painted a rosy picture of sailboats on pristine waters with bright beaches for swimming. In fact, the area was a nature reserve that was growing wild. Clearing the forest and creating the infrastructure to support a thousand home sites was to be a tremendous undertaking and a huge gamble. But most of all, it would take all of Barger's experience and sales skills to sell the concept to prospective buyers as well as to his financial backers.

The first president of Lake Barcroft Estates, Inc., was the assistant attorney general of Massachusetts, David Miller. The chairman of the board, Charles E. Dockser, periodically visited the site to check on how the money was being spent. Together, Dockser and Barger had developed over thirty-five other communities in the past, many featuring waterfront properties. Barger also had the benefit of counsel in Andrew W. Clark, a local Alexandria lawyer noted for pushing permits and variances through the county system.

## Developing the Property

Barger's purchase of Lake Barcroft included a farm just off Columbia Pike, where Aqua Terrace now stands. He set up his office there and contracted a prestigious surveying company, DeLashmutt and Associates, to lay out the streets and house lots. Barger's management style avoided hands-on participation in the actual construction process, so he hired local firms to install roads, sewers and a water system. The first roads were cleared in what is now Section One and extended from Beach 1 around the loop comprising Lakeview Drive, Stanford Circle and Tollgate Terrace. As lots sold, Lakeview Drive progressed to the west from Beach 1 along the water. The trees, hilly

terrain and hard clay soil were formidable obstacles; huge shale formations required considerable blasting. It was tough going and required massive capital investment up front.

Lake Barcroft was divided into three geographic areas, which exist to the present: (1) the South Area, extending from the dam to the footbridge at Holmes Run; (2) the North Area from the dam to Tripps Run; and (3) the Middle Area from Tripps Run to Holmes Run. Roads, sewers and water pipes were completed in the South Area first. As lots were selling and house construction was starting in the South Area, roads were cleared leading into the Middle Area from Sleepy Hollow Road along Dearborn Drive. The final phase of development was the North Area, from Columbia Pike along Blair Road. The area where Tripps Run emptied into Lake Barcroft was a marsh, so there was no direct passage between the Middle and North areas. It would be years before a causeway was constructed to connect the two.

The lots in the first sections were small, which led to zoning problems. The surveyor, Basil Delashmutt, argued with Barger, trying to convince him to enlarge the lots. Eventually Barger agreed, but it was too late for Sections One, Two and Three. To make matters worse, a sewer line parallel to Lakeview Drive—near the water—created an easement that pushed home construction either toward the street or close to the shoreline. In several cases, the houses had to be placed closer than the county building code permitted because of this restriction. The county recognized the problem and rubber-stamped requests for variances.

## The Salesman

Even with helpful county concessions on zoning and construction code requirements, Barger had difficulty making his payrolls. Dockser bailed him out with infusions of cash, but it was a race to make the project self-sustaining. Building proceeded apace, and construction traffic was heavy. In the South Area, Lakeview Drive was the only road that provided access to most of the home sites; Whispering Lane did not exist at the time. The early settlers wanted to slow down development and enjoy the relative isolation and tranquility of a quiet life in the woods. Barger, however, needed cash and pushed hard for sales.

In 1974, an early resident, Rex Chaney, reflected on the first twenty-four years of life in Lake Barcroft. His thoughts were



**Lake Barcroft Estates in the early 50's. There were only a few homes in the South Area and none in the Middle and North Areas. Notice the deltas of silt at the two stream inlets.**

published in the *Lake Barcroft Directory*, a portion of which is quoted below.

*Looking back on the early days when a not-very-hardy handful of us bought lots and built houses, we can remember the maps that showed nice paved roads where there were no roads; sketches of white sandy beaches where there were no beaches; gas mains on the charts where there was no gas—and no energy shortage to blame it on either.*

*Much of what we saw was in the fertile mind of that super salesman, Colonel Joseph V. Barger. All you had to do with that guy was show up at his office and you were as good as sold, money or no money. He made it clear he was only there to do favors for nice people who stopped by and showed an interest in Lake Barcroft. When the sales pitch ended and we had been relieved of a \$200 down payment on a \$10,000 or \$12,000 lot, we may have been a little shaken—but we were sure our dreams of owning a house on a lake had really come true.*

*To his credit, salesman that he was, Colonel Barger did deliver on some—maybe even most—of his promises. We got roads . . . and beaches . . . and gas. Furthermore, there was that beautiful lake, just like the man said, albeit with stumps on the shoreline and lily pads in the shallow areas.*

Despite the rustic setting and Barger's promises, the early buyers were betting on the future and ignoring the present. It is to their credit that so many stayed the course.

## **Real Estate**

Lake Barcroft Estates was one of the first major real estate developments in Fairfax County. Local realtors were reluctant to bring clients to such an undeveloped wilderness; developers had little experience in turning a reservoir into Barger's original concept—a community of small country estates. Colonel Barger worked hard for every sale. According to a colleague, Barger was "a typical land salesman . . . a vanishing breed." Barger was a savvy businessman. He advertised extensively and hired his own sales force. From 1950 to 1954, the sale and resale of lots and homes were slow, and in 1954-55, there was a "lot depression."

As more lots became accessible, an oversupply was created. Many people who bought lots did not have the money to build homes and grew weary of making payments. Real estate companies and lending institutions had the impression that Lake Barcroft would founder, so they were reluctant to make loans. In some instances, banks charged prospective Barcrofters mortgage rates that were higher than the market rate in order to discourage sales. The overall situation prompted some lot owners to sell at a loss. According to a local realtor, one man, on the advice of a resident, purchased a beautiful lakefront lot for \$5,000. He panicked almost immediately when people told him Lake Barcroft was nothing but a swamp; that the developers were fly-by-night; and that gas, water and sewer lines would never be installed. As a result of these reports, the man went to Barger and asked for his money back. Barger took the lot back, refunded the full price and resold the lot for \$9,500. One simply had to believe Barger and his vision of the future. Indeed, from 1955 to 1960, business soared.

## **Managing the Project**

To maintain some degree of control over construction, Barger insisted that an architectural review committee evaluate the design for each house. This was one of the first committees established by the residents. It was chaired by Ernest Rauth, an architect. Barger followed up by contracting with Rauth's firm, John M. Walton and Associates, to approve the design of all the houses. A minimum living area of 1,500 square feet—small by today's standards—was established to preclude the erection of beach cottages. Construction materials such as cinder blocks and logs were prohibited. Still in all, the houses built in the fifties were not so grand; today many homes are twice their original size.

As Lake Barcroft Estates, Inc., was getting off the ground, Barger set up Barcroft Beach, Inc. (BBI), a management company that listed the lake, beaches and dam as assets. The premise was to provide the lake and beaches to the residents for their own use. A \$60 annual fee was part of each property owner's deed to cover beach and dam maintenance, insurance and lifeguards. The lake was a major inducement to purchase lots, but the lake suffered from uncontrolled pollution and heavy silting. Holmes Run had formed a delta of silt, and Tripps Run emptied into a swamp. These drawbacks turned buyers away and became the focus of considerable debate between the residents and BBI, as it was commonly known, about who would bear the responsibility and the blame for the problems. It took years to resolve the dispute.

Early on, the residents identified the need to improve and maintain the beauty of the lake and to prevent pollution. As houses went up and the population grew, the residents banded together to address these and other issues. Eventually they formed the Lake Barcroft Community Association, which from the very beginning was effective in promoting positive change and anticipating future needs. The early residents set the standard for individual involvement in community organizations, which continues to this day.

# A Community Is Born

On February 23, 1954, the residents of Lake Barcroft approved the bylaws of their homeowners association, officially launching the Lake Barcroft Community Association (LABARCA). Over the preceding eighteen months, the settlers had come together informally to build a new life in a new community and, most importantly, to save the lake. Like most Washingtonians, they came from other places, which created a common bond and a reliance on one another. Their varied backgrounds and individual talents resolved numerous problems—from water sedimentation to litigation. Much was accomplished by the few people who first formed the community association.

## LABARCA

In the summer of 1952, almost two years after development began, fifteen families had completed building their new homes in Lake Barcroft. Ellen Oshins, a politically savvy Californian, suggested that the residents get together and form a homeowners association. The first meeting took place on July 1, 1952, at the home of Bob and Ellen Oshins on Stanford Circle. Ellen's father had patented the bobby pin so their home, the first completed, was beautifully furnished and was landscaped by a nationally known professional. During the next fifteen years, the Oshins were very active not only in the community but also on the local and national scene. Ellen Oshins was the first elected president of LABARCA, a member of the Democratic National Committee and a district delegate to Richmond. For his part, Bob Oshins is best remembered for composing "songs and poems at the drop of a hat," especially a witty ode satirizing internal strife within Lake Barcroft.

The eleven families present at the first meeting formed an Executive Committee consisting of Ellen Oshins, Dana Messer, General Robinson Duff, Ernest Rauth and Colonel Carl Lindstrand. They would serve until the group decided whether or not to write bylaws and organize formally. From the outset, the organization was known as the Lake Barcroft Community Association, the name that would survive until 1992. Colonel Barger was present at a second association meeting on July 15, 1952, where he discussed short- and long-range plans for Lake Barcroft, the role of the Architectural Review Committee and the status of Barcroft Beach, Inc. Thereafter, the colonel avoided association meetings.

Over that next year and a half, residents convened monthly meetings to address the issues at hand. The Executive

Committee appointed several committees—Health and Sanitation (Dr. Chris Murphy), Engineering (Ernest Weschenfelder) and Landscaping (Al Barrett). Alberta Colclaser was appointed parliamentarian. A Nominating Committee headed by Lee Rice drew up a slate of candidates, resulting in the election of officers on October 7, 1953. G. Edward Hacking, aided by Ken Hoyt, set about preparing the association's bylaws. During this period the association achieved several successes—some minor, others substantial.



Dr. Chris Murphy

## Community Action

A 1953 zoning issue showed the power of organization and collective action. Across Columbia Pike from Lake Barcroft, the owner of the 109-acre Darden Tract wanted to rezone the area so that a developer could build 1,000 apartment units. Petitions opposing the project were collected from the neighboring homeowners associations, including Pinecrest, Belvedere and Lakewood. Barger's representative and Ellen Oshins, representing LABARCA, presented the case to the county's Board of Supervisors, citing the negative impact of such a project on roads, schools, sewers and property values. John Webb, a candidate for the Virginia House of Delegates, represented the owner of the Darden Tract. A stormy session raged for ninety minutes and, in spite of Webb's threats to sue, the Board of Supervisors voted against building the apartments. Thus, LABARCA achieved its first notable victory.

The association continued to serve as an active representative and a strong voice for the young and growing community's interests. The association was persistent in taking stands against mass speculative housing in the area. LABARCA provided information for voters about registration and local elections and coordinated mail delivery to roadside mailboxes with the U.S. Post Office. To embellish the surroundings, unique wooden road signs were designed and installed; landscaping and a lighted sign were provided to enhance Entrance One at what is now Aqua Terrace. Workers installed storm drains at the beaches. Other associated activities ranged from determining the legal relationship with BBI to installing a floating boat dock at Beach 2.

## Organization

The bylaws for LABARCA, approved in February 1954, set up an Executive Board, replacing the Executive Committee, consisting of a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. The South, North and Middle Areas were designated, with an at-large board member representing each Section. Additional committees were established to deal with landscaping and roads, beaches, social activities and membership issues. Although many questions stirred up controversy and sparked arguments, the debates fostered healthy discussion. In the end, reason and compromise would combine to carry the day. A relatively small number of active participants—there were only 40 members in good standing in March 1954—were able to accomplish a great deal in eighteen months. By September 1954, however, the numbers had increased significantly: 31 in Section One, 16 in Section Two, 37 in Section Three, 12 in Section Four, 8 each in Sections Five and Seven, but none from Section Six—for a total of 112 association members.

Al Barrett, with a background in horticulture, chaired the Landscaping and Roads Committee. As the supervisor of the National Capital Parks in the District of Columbia, the areas for which he was responsible included Arlington Cemetery, the

National Mall, the Pentagon and the Capitol. Under Barrett's direction, association volunteers funded and landscaped the circles in Sections One and Four, Entrance One and the beaches. Barrett arranged to purchase crabapple trees, dogwoods, maples and oaks for planting. Perennials and annuals were available for flower beds in common areas. He convinced the State Road Commission to seed the medians in Sections Two and Three and to repair roads and drainage ditches. Much of the beauty residents enjoy today is a result of Al Barrett's planning and the hard work done by a handful of dedicated association members.

## Early Social Activities

It was not all work at Lake Barcroft, however. For example, 1954 was a very active year socially. The Entertainment Committee, chaired by Sunny Cruden (who was succeeded by Peggy Christians), organized three dances at Walnut Hill, a large estate located on Annandale Road near Gallows Road, which had been the home of Mr. Arnold, owner of Arnold Transit (which later became Washington Metro Transit). Black tie was *de rigueur*. On February 13, 1954, forty couples attended a Valentine's Day Dance at Dardenelles Restaurant. Parenthetically, at one community meeting a vote approved a maximum of \$10 per couple for a dinner-dance featuring buffet, bartender, band and drinks.

Also in 1954, a Spring Fashion Show drew rave reviews. The chairperson of the Children's Committee, Jean Murphy (now Vos), coordinated a very successful Labor Day Swim Meet. Children of all ages enjoyed community Halloween parties. Dancing classes were formed for fifth-eighth graders. Some of these traditions have survived in one form or another. Another innovation, the establishment of a Membership Committee headed by Beatrice Carland, promoted and kept track of association memberships. Block captains greeted newcomers and spread news about Lake Barcroft, especially association activities. This committee prepared and issued the first community maps and directories, which established the format used today.

## Barger and LABARCA

A major driving force behind forming LABARCA was the condition of the lake and the beaches. One association study ascertained the relationship between association members and Barcroft Beach, Inc. Although Colonel Barger owned and operated the lake, the residents wanted some control over its operation as well. Colonel Barger prepared a survey asking for members' input regarding the use of the lake and beaches, which resulted in a 1954 handout that set forth rules of conduct. Aside from addressing the normal safety issues and announcing standard hours of operation, swimming across the lake was prohibited as well as picnicking on the beaches. In addition, members were required to register and provide



**Sherman Vandevender**

identification every time they used the beach, and strict rules limited guests. For his part, Barger hired a popular local high school teacher and football coach, Sherman Vandevender, to oversee security and water safety programs at the beaches.

At about this time, two very different circumstances conspired to end Colonel Barger's vision of a private, gated community. The first unfortunate incident occurred in fall 1952, when some youths trespassed on the property after a Halloween party. A security guard, posted at the Aqua Terrace entrance, saw them toppling the lifeguard stand at Beach 1. After his warning to leave was ignored, he pulled out his .45 caliber pistol and fired a warning shot over their heads. The trajectory was such that the bullet struck an Annandale teenager in the back and killed him. That tragedy put an end to armed guards.

The second incident involved Barger's desire to preserve the rustic charm of the area by building private, semi-paved roads. Because the hilly terrain and heavy rains washed away roadbeds, making them difficult and expensive to maintain, Barger decided to upgrade the roads and turn their maintenance over to the Virginia Highway Department. Even though the roads had always been public, they could no longer be restricted. This outcome, coupled with the shooting incident, put an end to the idea of a private community.

The residents continued to voice their concerns over the condition of the lake. BBI was not sufficiently solvent to respond to LABARCA's complaints about silting and high bacterial counts. In 1953, the lake suffered some minor pollution and swimming had to be banned for a short time. The pollution-induced swimming ban was in effect even longer in 1954, a situation that was unacceptable to residents, who were paying an annual fee to BBI to use the lake. The standoff between LABARCA and BBI reached new heights in 1955 and even caused dissension within the association. Over the next several years, LABARCA persistently pressured the state, county and federal governments, as well as Colonel Barger to face the problems and to take action to solve them. Eventually, the association's efforts proved to be instrumental in obtaining the funding needed to end the decay of the lake and to create a model for best management practices for the operation of the lake.

# The Cadillac Community

*Now listen my children and you shall hear  
Of fifty-six, the famous year  
When Lake Barcroft, the jewel of civilization  
First became a sovereign nation.  
It all started back in fifty-five,  
Though hardly a man is now alive  
Who was there to hear the immortal speech  
Delivered that night by Patrick Henry Teates*  
—from “Blood in the Mud” by Bob Oshins

## A Community at Odds

These are the first of some thirty verses of a poem satirizing a controversial August 1955 meeting, which threatened to split the Lake Barcroft Community Association. Robert Teates (rhymes with Keats) delivered an impassioned speech before the association, the aim of which was to persuade members to take more positive action in the affairs of their community.

*“Let’s be a district and take command,”  
Said our peerless leader with a wave of his hand.  
“But then,” he cried with an awesome frown,  
“It might be better to be a town.”  
He was moving on from town to city,  
All to be planned by his own committee,  
But those soulless clods, the Executive Board  
Insisted that order be restored.*

Teates wanted to establish a special Planning Committee with a chairman to be nominated and elected at that very meeting. The chairman would have the power to appoint four to ten members to explore the following issues:

- possible solutions to the problems of pollution and siltation of the lake by having the authority to deal directly with federal, state, local or other agencies; and
- the feasibility of incorporating the association, organizing a sanitary district for Lake Barcroft, and incorporating the community as a town.

The proposal flew in the face of everything the Executive Board was trying to do. The new committee would be beyond the board’s control, and it would interfere with ongoing initiatives to bring Colonel Barger and government agencies together in an effort to resolve the problems caused by the lake’s contamination. LABARCA’s president,

Donald Birrell, ruled that such a committee would violate the association’s bylaws.

*And appointed a group with spirits mean  
Chaired by a philistine named Robert Green,  
Who tried with talk of making things legal?  
To clip the wings of our soaring eagle.  
(Oh ‘twould have been better to have no committee at all  
or at least one headed by Blumenthal)  
But try as they would with their petty bleats,  
They could not vanquish Sir Winston Teates*

The discussion became heated; a demand was made that Mr. Birrell vacate the president’s chair. Colonel Green, mentioned in the verse quoted above, countered that the appeal was out of order. More discussion ensued, and members of the board protested that any motion to set up a separate entity was a repudiation of all that had been done and was being done. Members challenged Teates to participate in the board’s actions, instead of condemning them. Finally, Dr. Chris Murphy and George Bates brought some semblance of order to the meeting with their statements stressing reason. LABARCA’s business resumed on a steady course.

The rest of the ode is a very witty, tongue-in-cheek battle putting Bob Teates in the shoes of Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Paul Revere, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Jonas Salk and Walter Mitty in addition to Patrick Henry and Winston Churchill mentioned above, as he led the citizens of his nation, “Barcroftia,” against the forces opposed to cleaning up the lake, namely Colonel Barger. Bob Oshins, husband of LABARCA’s founder and first president, cleverly captured the community’s divisiveness with regard to the action, or lack thereof, in trying to solve the problems of pollution and siltation.

## Pollution Problems

The lake had always been the main attraction to living in Lake Barcroft. From the beginning, problems had arisen from the uncontrolled flow into the lake from Tripps Run and Holmes Run. Considerable sedimentation and pollution affected the recreational use of the lake and lakefront lots. Factors outside of Lake Barcroft Estates—including pollution from privies, cesspools and inadequate septic systems—also had a serious impact on the Lake Barcroft watershed. These problems were the result of nearby construction of large





**By Year 2001, WID had dredged approximately 400,000 cubic yards of sediment out of Lake Barcroft at a cost of about \$2,100,000. (October 1965)**

housing developments and new businesses, which was outpacing the demands for sufficient sewage and causing more runoff. Consequently, the existing sewer system was severely overloaded.

The fledgling community association raised the issues of erosion, soil sedimentation and pollution with Colonel Barger in 1952. His lack of action prompted the association to form an Engineering Committee in 1953. The committee issued a report that outlined the problems and set forth preliminary recommendations. Barger failed to take the necessary steps to rectify the situation, so the association took matters into its own hands.

The first priority was to stop pollution entering the lake from Tripps Run. The association asked the county's Board of Supervisors to accelerate the construction of a new sewer line. The county board also approved LABARCA's request to prohibit use of the old sewer line by any new subdivisions. At the same time, the state's Highway Department agreed to seed roadside banks in an effort to reduce erosion. Despite these measures, in summer 1954 the bacteria counts increased. The pollution was partly attributable to the Tripps Run sewer line but also because of a faulty pump installed by BBI at Beach 3, which led to installation of standby pumps at all pumping stations.

## **Dredging**

The association coerced Barger into hiring a consulting firm, Kendricks and Associates of Arlington, to study the entire watershed area and to recommend solutions to the short-term problem of sewage pollution and to the long-range problem of pollution from silt and erosion. The state's water commission was contacted to ascertain the state's authority over the sources of erosion and drainage. A LABARCA delegation, accompanied by County Supervisor Anne A. Wilkins, presented the association's case to Fairfax County executives.

The upshot of the association's persistence was a decision announced by the Commonwealth of Virginia in July 1954: Fairfax County was assigned to handle the matter. A year of studies and investigations followed. Dr. Chris Murphy, chairman of the Health Committee, tracked the bacterial count at various spots in the lake, and his work with county health officials proved to be instrumental in improving testing procedures. Because environmental concerns were not considered important in those days, there was no instrumentation to conduct on-site tests. Instead, water samples were delivered to a laboratory in Richmond for analysis, thus delaying the process and actually generating artificially higher counts of contaminants in the samples.

Fortunately, there were knowledgeable people in the community who volunteered their time and energy to solve the problems of pollution and siltation: Don Birrell and Joseph Tofani, sedimentation specialists with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Louis Gottschalk, who worked for the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Gottschalk spearheaded a study that recommended removal of sediment and construction of sediment collection basins. Birrell's Engineering Committee developed a silt-dredging plan that would move silt from one place to another rather than the expensive alternative of removing the silt and taking it away.

The dredging plan called for the creation of two man-made islands and the construction of two underwater silt basins, one at each end of the lake. The Engineering Committee estimated the cost of the project at approximately \$180,000 and recommended that Fairfax County pay 75 percent and Barger pay the rest. Finally, after a great deal of prodding by the various committees and presidents of LABARCA, Barger appeared ready to cooperate. The proposition was presented to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, but the board was not about to take taxpayer money out of the county's general fund to dredge a private lake. As a result of this request, the supervisor of the Falls Church District, Thomas S. Gray, made headlines by referring to Lake Barcroft—in what has become an oft-used snide description—as “the Cadillac Community.”

The arguments on both sides were persuasive, and LABARCA representatives acquitted themselves very well. In fact, their suggestion recommending the use of surplus funds from a

1954 Sanitary District bond issue turned the tide. Mason District Supervisor Anne Wilkins provided energetic and skillful support. Ultimately, the county agreed to pay \$90,000 if BBI would pay the other half of the estimated cost of the project. An original provision to reimburse Fairfax County was dropped. The expected negative newspaper publicity ended quickly; one source comparing the political reverberations as “only 3.2 on the Richter scale.” As the dredging proceeded, there were cost overruns, but Barger—flinching only slightly—anted up an additional \$23,000 so that the job could be completed by 1962.

So it was that the struggle to clean up the lake was finally funded and the actual work could begin. Problems arose and mistakes were made, but overall this was the beginning of efforts—that continue to this day—to maintain the lake in the excellent condition that residents enjoy and, perhaps, take too much for granted.

While Bob Teates may have been tilting at windmills in his Mittyesque quest for control, the poem is a humorous reminder that the citizens of Lake Barcroft did indeed win the battle for assistance in cleaning up the lake. The final stanza of Oshins' poem, which he punningly subtitled “A Sedimental Ode,” reads as follows:

*So we live a proud nation with a lake that is pure,  
Free of bacteria, silt and manure.  
And each Barcroftian blesses as each new day he greets  
The memory of Walter Mitty Teates.*



1961

# Stuart Finley Takes the Helm

The years 1959-60 changed the course of history for the United States in general and for Lake Barcroft in particular. John F. Kennedy defeated Richard M. Nixon for the presidency of the United States, and Stuart Finley became president of the Lake Barcroft Community Association. While Kennedy's presidency would end after a thousand days, Finley's association with the lake and the community would endure for the next forty years, with no end in sight!

## The Community Grows

Lake Barcroft achieved upscale status in the beginning of the 1960s. Notable politicians such as President Kennedy's press secretary, Pierre Salinger, Attorney General Ramsey Clark, and congressmen Wayne Hays, Melvin Price and Charlie Bennett moved into the community. Over a few short years, the number of families living at Lake Barcroft increased substantially: from 368 in 1956, to 650 in 1958, and 783 in 1960. By mid-1960, LABARCA membership had reached a record high: of the 783 families living in Lake Barcroft, 614—78 percent—were members of the association. Real estate prices were rising as well. By 1960, a number of comparable new homes purchased for \$23,500-\$25,000 in the mid- to late-fifties were reselling for approximately \$32,000. Mary Price, a realtor as well as a resident, remarked, "I'm not here by accident. There is nothing in the Washington area that can hold a candle to Lake Barcroft."

The value of lots increased as their availability decreased. The days of \$3,000 plots were over, and the price of off-lake lots reached \$10,000. Lakefront property, which originally had sold for \$12,000, now commanded \$20,000. One realtor estimated that the lowest-valued lot on the water in the Middle Area was listed at \$22,500 at that time. To close out his enterprise, Colonel Barger continued to sell home sites and parcels of lots to builders; for example, in 1960, one builder gladly paid \$18,000 for a pair of lots that had been valued at \$8,500 in 1958.

## Finley Elected President

By the early 1960s, LABARCA had become an important part of community life, and the success of Lake Barcroft could be attributed to the hard work of association members during the preceding decade. The first competitive election for association president in LABARCA's history, which took place in late

1959, featured two candidates, each highly qualified and dedicated to the community. Ralph Spencer, an official at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, had been asked to run in recognition of his work as chairman of the association's Planning Committee. Prior to his chairmanship, a committee had studied the idea of constructing a community center to be located in an undeveloped area near the dam compound. The majority of association members favored the concept; a 1958 survey polled 273 for and 72 opposed. Spencer promoted the community center despite pessimistic arguments against establishing a "dance hall" on the lake. Ralph agreed to be nominated, and members naturally associated him with the project.

A faction of members who favored dredging the lake convinced Stuart Finley to enter the race based on his expertise in issues dealing with sediment and erosion; he had produced a fifty-part television series called *Our Beautiful Potomac*. Because funding for silt removal had already been approved by Fairfax County and BBI, association pressure mounted to resolve a festering sore point—the gradual decay of the lake. Finley also enjoyed name recognition since he worked as a television news announcer for the local RCA station, WNBW (now WRC-TV). Stuart Finley won the amicable, low-key election, and Ralph Spencer pitched right in, volunteering to take on the task of procuring and maintaining street signs, a responsibility he shouldered for over forty years.

## First Steps

Stuart Finley's first report to the membership was published in the association's January 1960 newsletter and stressed a point articulated by Ellen Oshins: "Sometimes we forget that when we formed the Lake Barcroft Community Association several years ago, our primary motivation was to protect and enhance a community which is a wonderful place to live and where the people are fine neighbors and good friends." To this end, Finley realigned the various committees, dividing some and creating new ones, including Constitution and Bylaws, Directory, Finance, Law and Order, and Silt Surveillance. The reorganization distributed responsibilities more widely and relieved some overburdened volunteers.

With Finley's firm grip on the wheel, the board called for action: modernization of the bylaws, revitalization of street signs, reduction in dues from \$5 to \$3.50 and administration of complaints. The board placed new emphasis on an old

problem, namely, the pros and cons of assuming ownership of the lake and ways to communicate with Colonel Barger on the topic. In 1960, after a teenager had fallen through the ice in mid-lake and almost drowned, a committee was mandated to warn members about the hazards of ice-skating and to look into the issue of ice safety. The association's new treasurer instituted a modern accounting system to track annual income and expenditures, which had quickly grown, as more homes were built, from \$3,000 to \$15,000. (Compare this to Lake Barcroft Association's current annual budget of more than \$200,000).

The *Lake Barcroft Newsletter* became the voice of the community and took on a new look under the editorship of Alan Emory, who was succeeded by Rex Lauck. Previously, the publication had been typed, mimeographed, and stapled; now it was printed and saddle-stitched. Advertisements were included to help defray production costs. The advertising director, Virginia Dunn, used a stable of volunteers to coordinate the solicitation of ads. An ad for Garfinckel's Department Store, which was sold by Stuart Finley, was the first ad to appear in the newsletter. A series of eye-catching and humorous advertisements by landscape expert George Thrasher subtly urged readers to beautify their properties and thereby the community. Eventually, realtors bought space to report on the comings and goings of Barcrofters as well as on community events. Professional photographers captured scenes of the lake and their pictures graced newsletter covers.

Association members authorized spending \$500 to hire a city planner to study the area bounded by Route 7, Columbia Pike



George Thrasher (July 27, 1965)

and Sleepy Hollow Road. Oscar Sutermeister came highly recommended as a result of his work with the Ravenwood Park Association near Seven Corners. The long-term planning questions he was asked to address included the impact of development in several forms: commercial enterprises, apartment buildings, subdivisions and the construction of interchanges and streets to handle the anticipated growth in the neighborhoods adjacent to Lake Barcroft. Short-term issues focused on the county's intention to extend Lakeview Drive to Sleepy Hollow Road and Virginia Highway Department's plans to build a causeway over Holmes Run, where the footbridge now stands.

The planned extension of Lakeview Drive to Sleepy Hollow Road emanated from the county's policy to connect adjacent subdivisions, in this case, Lake Barcroft and Barcroft Woods, the latter then in the planning stage. LABARCA and the developer of Barcroft Woods petitioned county planners to eliminate the extension on the basis that it would be used as a cut-through from Sleepy Hollow Road to Columbia Pike. In return, Finley promised that the association would not oppose the causeway at some later date, correctly assuming that the state's Highway Department would barely be able to keep up with repairing potholes. The membership backed this compromise; and a housing cul-de-sac in Barcroft Woods later eliminated the possibility of a cut-through.

## Reviving the Lake

The new Silt Surveillance Committee under Bill Godel was formed to create a siltation and pollution surveillance program. Finley realized that continuous efforts would be required to handle the never-ending problem, but his immediate attention centered on cleaning up the lake. Much has been written about the dredging that has taken place, and the *Watershed Improvement District Quinquennial Report*, published in 1992, goes into great detail about what has been done to make and maintain the lake. Stuart Finley and his colleagues invested considerable time and energy—not only at the beginning but also through the years—to save the lake and tackle its ongoing problems. However, the early volunteers did more than planning and management. Kirk Burns recalls venturing out on a rickety, quivering catwalk at the top of the dam during heavy storms. He and other volunteers helped the damkeeper manually manipulate the old wooden gates to release the heavy flow of water and to prevent the loss of the catwalk-gate superstructure. These were courageous and risky feats performed sixty feet above the streambed amid howling winds and pouring rain.

With the combined county and BBI funding of \$180,000 authorized for dredging, the Executive Board concentrated on gaining access to the silt and contracting for its removal. Local lawyer Carrington Williams, chairman of the Legal Committee, took on the tough and thankless task of



**Four workmen are trying to figure out how to repair the decrepit old dam gates back in the 1960's. These wooden gates were supposed to open automatically during a storm, but usually they stuck. In fact, most of them stayed closed during Hurricane Agnes causing the failure of the Barcroft Dam and thus the creation of the Watershed Improvement District. (May 1963)**

negotiating with homeowners for easements to move equipment across their properties. He was successful in this and many other endeavors supporting the community. Later, he would be elected to the Virginia House of Delegates. As for a solicitation for bids, the county, BBI, LABARCA and a consulting engineer each had an interest in the project, thus causing significant delays in the process. Finally, in 1960, the bids for the actual dredging went out; the only response, unfortunately, was \$105,000 over the budget allocated. To stay within the amount of funds available for the project, two major changes had to be made: (1) the idea of moving the silt to another location was dropped and replaced by the construction of peninsulas and islands using the dredged sediment; and (2) a major portion of the requirement to stabilize the banks with stone (called "riprap") was deleted. Eventually, all the parties involved came to an agreement on the project and negotiated a contract with the successful bidder, Morauer and Hartzell, Inc., on May 1, 1961.

BBI lowered the lake level five feet and work commenced. Dredging in those days used high-boom draglines and dump trucks riding on "underwater roads" made of rock and gravel next to two silt basins. The contractor built dikes and filled in the areas that became, in 1962, peninsulas at Beach 3 and Beach 5. Although homeowners at the Holmes Run end of the lake would have preferred to keep their tranquil, water view rather than gaze at a bare island, there was not much choice.

Tree stumps and gravel beds with stones four to six inches in diameter posed special obstacles at Tripps Run. On both sides of the Tripps Run channel, the silt was used to build up lots, which are now located on Beachway and Waterway Drives. Some lakefront property owners seized the opportunity to pay for improvements to their shoreline, thus enhancing the general appearance of the community by ridding the lake of weeds and lily pads.

After eighteen months, the original dredging program came to an end; 116,000 cubic yards of silt were concentrated in new locations creating the Holmes Run island and the peninsulas at beaches 5 and 3. The project had been a massive undertaking for planners and implementers, who often learned from their mistakes. One major error involved the underwater sediment basins at each end of the lake. Designed to collect heavier silt particles, the basins were estimated to have capacities that would last for twenty or twenty-five years. Two years later, they were full, however. Realistically, dredging and the associated costs would prove to be continuing problems. Again, the association successfully addressed the issue by using a little-known law to fund local projects. Under the unlikely title "Small Sanitary District," the association approved self-imposed taxation, which paid for dredging and other important engineering improvements over the next ten years—yet another clever solution to a seemingly intractable problem.



George Ureke (left) and Rex Lauck (wearing glasses) give an award to a Swim Team winner.

# "What Do I Get For My \$10?"

The title of this chapter comes from a 1960s newsletter article written by Colonel Myron Birnbaum, in which he explained to nonmembers and to some disgruntled LABARCA members the various uses of association dues. Aside from covering the costs associated with the directory and newsletter, funds paid expenses incurred in dealings with county, state and federal agencies as well as for the Swim Club, baseball leagues and other youth activities. Dues provided for the Fourth-of-July fireworks and Labor Day festivities, financed minor repairs and covered administrative expenses. In the article, Birnbaum noted that there was absolutely no way LABARCA could afford the high-level skills and experience of its many hardworking volunteers, who donated their time, but added that some community activities required cash.

Nevertheless, being a member of LABARCA provided a great deal more than the activities and projects financed by association dues. Membership offered the opportunity for active participation in a dynamic community. In the 1960s, energetic individuals and groups started numerous programs that were geared to a variety of interests. There was something for everyone: bridge, gourmet cooking, lawn and garden competitions, social clubs, arts and crafts, athletic events and youth activities. LABARCA budgeted modest sums to defray expenses for some activities, but most were self-supporting.

## Activities

At a board meeting in 1960, Dr. Chris Murphy declared, "We're not doing enough for our kids. I'm going to do something." With that, he embarked on an ambitious summer recreation program. That summer's four-week program grew

into ten-week programs in 1961 and 1962. By the third year, 275 youngsters were participating in winter and summer athletic programs like archery, softball, croquet, basketball, badminton, horseshoe tossing, swimming and sailing. Golf, bowling, ice hockey and rifle instruction took place at facilities nearby. Fishing, tennis and gymnastics rounded out the program. Finally, a teen club was formed to provide a social outlet and to promote good works within the community.

All of this took tremendous effort on the part of volunteers, who planned, supervised and provided transportation for the



Lake Barcroft Teen Queen and her court

activities, prompting Jean Murphy-Vos to comment, “This wasn’t a Cadillac community, it was a station wagon community.” Two teenage directors managed the various programs with financial help from LABARCA, the Woman’s Club, several builders and interested individuals. The summer activities culminated in a Labor Day extravaganza called “Beach Olympics,” featuring a parade of floats prepared and decorated by the children. A Teen Queen and her court reigned over the festivities and awarded prizes won by contestants in swimming competitions. Selected youths demonstrated their prowess in the various activities they learned over the summer. Finally, beach games, including sack races, three-legged races, balloon blowing and a penny pile rounded out the busy day and signaled the end of summer.

## Water Sports

At one point in the early sixties, Navy Commander Jim Guy, commodore of Lake Barcroft’s Sailing Club, ordered thirty-six sailboats for interested families. The Super Sailfish-class became the racing standard because it could be easily righted by a nine-year-old. Given the tricky winds, lake sailing can be a real test of even the best sailors, especially in a sensitive boat like the Sailfish. The lake made a great place to learn the fundamentals. Young and old alike received instruction in sailing. Their skills could be tested on Sundays, when there were racing events divided into categories: juniors, pairs, adults and an open competition. Boat crews earned points for placing



in races over the three months, culminating in a two-day championship match—held at the end of the summer—among the top four monthly winners in each category. The season culminated in an annual awards banquet.

Sherman Vandevender, the supervisor of water safety, and his lifeguards provided swimming lessons at the beaches for adults and children alike. Successful candidates could qualify for Red Cross lifesaving certificates. Using his experience as a former Navy Seal, Sherman also taught scuba diving. By 1964, he had trained 150 students, including 10 women, 20 men, 15 girls and over 100 boys. Twenty-five of Sherman’s students belonged to the Century Club, membership requiring dives to one hundred feet in a nearby rock quarry.

In addition to lessons, the lake became a center for competitive swimming. Volunteer coaches begged for time at area pools until a makeshift arrangement of ropes was rigged at Beach 2 to delineate racing lanes. In the winter, swimmers trained at the Alexandria YMCA. The Swim Club evolved into one of the most popular programs for the residents, and the teams did very well against competitors, whose practices were limited to swimming pools. In anticipation of upcoming races, the participants would decorate a float or a car and drive through Lake Barcroft cheering for their team, usually to the accompaniment of loud music. The events provided lots of fun and drew a great deal of good-natured attention.

## Socializing

LABARCA held three dinner dances annually at various locations, including the Fairfax Country Club, the Army-Navy Country Club, the Westwood Country Club and the Marriott Motor Inn. In 1964, Barney O’Rourke initiated junior versions of the adult dances for teenagers and college students. As an example, on one occasion, approximately eighty youngsters attended a hop in the air-conditioned Moose Hall at Bailey’s Crossroads. For a dollar per person, guests enjoyed live music by The Echoes. Herb Davis, a local radio and TV personality, presented “two or three bushels” of hi-fi records as door prizes and also presided over the selection of the Lake Barcroft Teen Queen.

In 1962, several young and not so young thespians produced their first show, *Global Glamour*, which was sponsored by the Lake Barcroft Woman’s Club. The idea for a show grew out of a Woman’s Club member’s desire to foster community spirit by providing a venue through which adults and teens could work together for a good cause. In this case, their creative efforts in staging a theater production raised funds for charity. The next year, residents and others filled





the Congressional School's auditorium to see *This Is My Country*. The third stage production, *Tickets Please*, was held at J.E.B. Stuart High School and featured accomplished troupers Millie and Will Fazar.

## Clubs

In 1965, Caroline Jones, a new arrival to Lake Barcroft, brought together fifteen other women to organize a Newcomer's Club to welcome new residents who had come to Lake Barcroft from such diverse cities as Paris, Saigon, Seattle and Bethesda. After a few struggling months, the club's popularity assured its future, and by 1970 membership totaled fifty-eight individuals. After two years, members graduated into so-called fifth wheel groups. Later, residents unified these groups into the Barcrofters to formalize the post-newcomer organization. The founder and first president of the Newcomer's Club, Caroline Jones, later became LABARCA's newsletter editor, an excellent example of how membership in the Newcomer's Club inspires active community involvement.

Founded in 1955, the Lake Barcroft Woman's Club had established an enviable record of community service by the mid-1960s. In addition to sponsoring social activities—such as bridge games, tours, luncheons and an annual picnic—the club raised money for various charities and scholarships. The Polio Foundation praised the Lake Barcroft Woman's Club for distributing over eight thousand vaccines. The club joined the Fairfax County Blood Bank. Contributions to the Fairfax Hospital Building Fund paid for a room and provided decor. A Sick Room Loan Closet—created in 1961 under President Helen O'Rourke—continues to the present. Vonnie Bates had organized the Independence Day Parade for several years, and in 1964, the Woman's Club joined her in sponsoring this popular event. The Easter Egg Hunt, another longstanding tradition, has continued for forty years.

Children living in Lake Barcroft attended four different elementary schools in the 1960s: Belvedere, Sleepy Hollow, St Anthony's, and Bailey's. Activities at these schools also provided a social outlet and an opportunity to help others. The Bailey's PTA held an annual carnival to raise money for school equipment. Parents and children alike worked hard building booths, baking cookies, collecting items for white elephant sales and securing donations from local businesses. Proceeds from the carnival provided record players for every room, television sets for every two rooms, shade trees, flags, opaque projectors, overhead projectors, books, records and cocoa for the school's patrol guards on cold days. It is important to note that parents "considered the work gratifying and derived a feeling of well being from the mission accomplished."

## The International Committee

Dr. J. T. (Dock) Houk formed an International Committee chartered to promote community participation in several areas involving international affairs. As a result, volunteers hosted foreign visitors for tours of Washington, D.C., and the lake. For the benefit of interested residents, members of the committee publicized several agencies that were engaged in supporting foster children in Third World countries. Knowledgeable Barcrofters offered technical and social assistance to underdeveloped countries through DATA International, a "postal Peace Corps." A project to link with a sister community in South America resulted in raising \$500





**Sailing Club Skippers**

for the hundred-family Peruvian village of Chimo, located on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the largest lake in South America; the contribution from LABARCA supplemented a \$1,500 U.S. AID grant that was used to purchase a fishing boat and tackle for village residents.

A noteworthy project in July 1964 was Operation Bus Stop, in which twenty-seven Lake Barcroft families participated. The International Committee cooperated with the Woman's Club to coordinate housing for forty-three students from New Zealand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand and Laos. Their weeklong visit climaxed a year's study at high schools across the nation. While in Washington D.C., the students visited the White House, where they met President Lyndon Johnson; they lunched at various embassies; and they enjoyed a concert at the Watergate. Louise Heid, the head of the group sponsoring Lake Barcroft's part of the program, arranged a party for the students and their teenage hosts, featuring a cruise around the lake aboard Captain Art Schmoyer's fleet of Riviera Cruisers, followed by dinner and dancing. "If the dress, talk and other mannerisms didn't prove how Americanized these kids had become," one adult observed, "the dancing settled it. Wait until their parents see what they learned in America."

Operation Bus Stop continued for several years under the auspices of the American Field Service and led to the exchange of French and American students for a month in the summer. The program, Vacances Studieuses, gave the French students the opportunity to practice their conversational English and to learn about America. Sadly, the program came to an end when relations between the two countries soured. Therese St. Hilaire recalls hosting a young French lad who traced his ancestry back to 1052 and insisted on being treated in accordance with his title, Count. Unfortunately, the boy had developed a mad crush on one of Therese's daughters and became terribly agitated when any other young man came near her. Although the situation was embarrassing at the time, the family laughs about it now.

### **Bowling Leagues**

Dr. Chris Murphy started a duckpin bowling league in 1956. By 1964, twenty-four teams competed as part of the LABARCA Evening League. Teams consisted of five or six members, with no more than three members of the same sex.

The president of the 1963-64 league, Bob Allebaugh, was succeeded by George Baker. In addition, the Ladies Daytime Bowling League fielded twelve teams of four members each. Jean Murphy's Les Miserables team won first place in 1964, with Elsie Kolm's Bowling Bags taking second. The bowling league competitions were popular social events for many years. Each season was capped by a "black tie" dinner dance—always a joyous and festive event, which lasted to the wee hours of the morning.

The Lake Barcroft community seems to have matured in the sixties, as its population stabilized. LABARCA took on more and more responsibilities and Colonel Barger's influence waned. Despite the turbulence in the country in those years, Lake Barcroft residents remained involved citizens. Many of the activities started in the early years survive to the present. Others faded away for any number of reasons: individual leaders moved on, the demographics changed, and more pressing issues arose. The community spirit lives on, however, as is evident in the many ways individuals continue to volunteer their spare time for the good of Lake Barcroft and its residents.

# Signs of the Times

Residents of Lake Barcroft should appreciate the fact that the community's attractive surroundings did not come about by chance. The natural beauty of Lake Barcroft may often be taken for granted when driving, walking or cruising through the area. It is easy to overlook the obvious and never think to question why or how the present setting evolved. Trees and bushes planted thirty-five years ago turned mud flats into gardens. Street signs unique to Lake Barcroft grace the landscape. Curbs and gutters prevent flooding and erosion. Moreover, the lake itself is a glittering gem.

## Small Sanitary District

On May 24, 1962, LABARCA's president, Rex Lauck, and the Executive Board unanimously endorsed a resolution requesting the formation of a Small Sanitary District within the geographical limits of Lake Barcroft's subdivisions. At a general meeting of the association, the members voted for the proposal, which would fund continuing silt removal and other local projects designed to enhance the lake and protect property values. The Fairfax County Circuit Court approved the petition, which imposed a county tax on property owners in Lake Barcroft. For the first year, at a budgeted rate of 25¢ per \$100 on the \$13,034,275 total assessed valuation for all Lake Barcroft properties, the levy amounted to \$32,585.69 for the entire community—about \$35 per year for each homeowner.

The money from the Small Sanitary District financed dredging every two years. For the alternate years, Fairfax County—reasoning that self-help programs stretched the county's treasury—matched the Small Sanitary District funds to improve front footage, that is, curbs and storm sewers. Colonel Barger's original concept—to retain the area's natural, rustic beauty—had featured open culverts for water runoff, but with the passage of time, some of these became unsightly and dangerous ditches. On Whispering Lane, for example, one hole became "large enough to swallow a Volkswagen," according to Stuart Finley's

engineering report. Considerable work was undertaken on Whispering Lane, Jay Miller Drive and Woodland Circle as well as on Blair Road and Stoneybrae Drive. Storm sewers, curbs and gutters mark the results of the special taxation on Lake Barcroft residents.

## Beautification

The creation of the peninsulas and an island from dredged silt gave birth to a unique "rurban" (presumably, rural/urban) project. LABARCA and the Northern Virginia Soil Conservation District cooperated on a project to plant hundreds of trees and shrubs to accomplish three objectives: (1) to prevent the silt from eroding back into the lake; (2) to assure that the plantings were attractive and provided a habitat for wildlife; and (3) to provide an opportunity for the Soil Conservation District to compare growth characteristics of several plants under unfavorable soil conditions. Glen Anderson, a soil conservationist from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, recruited specialists to assist in designing the



Marshall Augustine and Glen Anderson of the Soil Conservation Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture install erosion control jute netting to a newly established demonstration planting at Beach 5. (June 1963)

project and obtained plant materials donated for demonstration studies. Anderson personally supervised the planting, and LABARCA provided the labor in the form of member volunteers.

Some seedlings planted in the 1960s now reach a height of a hundred feet. At the time, fifty bald cypress trees and fifty Japanese black pine trees lined the banks of the island and peninsulas. Shrubs included mountain indigo, bush honeysuckle, *Rugosa* rose and red-stemmed dogwood. Anderson selected each tree and shrub to serve a different purpose: autumn olive berries attract wildlife, dogwoods tolerate “wet feet” at the water’s edge, and needle rush swamp grass and six species of dwarf willow trees prevent shoreline erosion. Thus, the community was able to reap the benefits of the full resources of the Department of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation Service and its Plant Material Division.

### Street Signs

A little-known historical fact concerns the street signs in Lake Barcroft. In the early 1950s, Fairfax County proposed to erect standard county signs, but Colonel Barger, in keeping with his desire for a distinctive community, decided to design and install handsome wooden signs instead. The county took the position that the residents would have to pay for and maintain any nonstandard signs. The first signs were mounted on nonpressure-treated wooden posts that eventually deteriorated, so in 1960, Ralph Spencer volunteered to take on the task of procuring new signs that included a water theme. At the time, the LABARCA board was reluctant to use membership dues to pay for the purchase of capital improvements; therefore, Ralph was forced to raise the funds needed for the project himself.

A fellow Barcrofter, who was associated with the National Enamel Institute, steered Ralph toward a California company that made enameled street signs. Ralph requested photographs of samples, picked out a green sign with a sailboat motif (made for Redondo Beach, California) and ordered the same sign in blue—at a price of about \$15 per sign. To raise money, Ralph asked for, and received, voluntary contributions of \$4.50 from each family, which paid for the signs, posts, brackets and cement in which the signs were embedded. The state installed the signs at no charge.

Ralph Spencer was responsible for the eighty-two signs in our community for over 40 years. His efforts were not limited to

the initial replacement of the old signs since all sorts of problems would continue to crop up. In the sixties, for example, the signs were plagued by vandalism; many had to be replaced after they were defaced or completely torn away. Youngsters would hang on the signs and break the bolts, which would crack the enamel. Some Cavalier Corridor signs ended up at the University of Virginia, home of the Virginia Cavaliers. Thus, over the years, Ralph was spending countless hours repairing the damage and repainting the signs.

Ralph and Ernie Rauth discussed the problem and came up with a viable solution—using super hard bolts to mount the signs—and this stopped the vandalism. Eventually, the sign company in California went out of business, but Ernie found a company in Falls Church to replicate the originals using aluminum and a sign painter to do the lettering.

Ralph Spencer also took on the task of obtaining streetlights. At first, lighting had to be an extension of existing streetlights from adjacent subdivisions. The county required petitions from homeowners requesting installation of streetlights in their surrounding area. Some residents wanted the county’s lights; others preferred to maintain a more rustic setting by having individual homeowners install lampposts on their property.



August 1974

Working through LABARCA, Ralph collected the signatures, went to the county and obtained the streetlights. Today Lake Barcroft has some areas with lighting and some without, but residents can still petition for more.



**Before WID initiated the idea of leaf pickup and convinced the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to collect leaves every fall, folks used to burn their leaves creating air pollution and damaging asphalt roadways.**

## Street Names

In 1964, Fairfax County adopted a grid pattern numbering system, which renumbered all of the county's streets and also allowed changes to street names. This opened the door for the residents of Lake Barcroft to rid themselves of less-imaginative addresses and to choose street names that were better suited to their surroundings. Colonel Barger's original plan to retain the rustic flavor of the area included "giving streets quaint names such as Tollgate Terrace, Bridge Circle and Grasshopper Drive." In the end, however, he succumbed to rewarding some friends and associates by naming streets after them. For example, Dockser Terrace and Mansfield Road have survived to acknowledge a partner, Charles Dockser, and an associate, Richard Mansfield, respectively. Barger honored Ellen Oshins, the first resident of Lake Barcroft, by naming Stanford Circle after her alma mater.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, LABARCA sent questionnaires to Lake Barcroft residents, soliciting their views on renaming their streets. The idea met with both relish and reluctance. Although most people indicated a general satisfaction with the status quo, there were some exceptions and even some amusing inputs. For example, Reuben Fleischbein wanted his street—Pinetree Terrace—changed to R. Richard vonFleischbein Strasse, and another resident expressed a desire to change Tollgate Terrace to Barry Goldwater Place. A tongue-in-cheek editorial in the Newsletter, admonished the Board, "LABARCA officials, showing their lack of vision and imagination ruled against

both names on the specious grounds that they are too long to fit on a street sign." In the end, the community held a referendum on all the proposed changes, the results of which are listed below.

**Fairfax Parkway**, as Barger had christened the entrance into Lake Barcroft, was renamed **Aqua Terrace**, a name chosen by Barger for the street's proximity to the water. Fairfax Parkway still exists across Columbia Pike from the entrance, not to be confused with the Fairfax County Parkway in Springfield.

**Joallen Drive** and **Joallen Court**, which had been named after Joe Allen, a popular salesman for Colonel Barger, was changed to **Beachway Drive**. The memory of another salesman, Jay Miller, lives on as **Jay Miller Drive**.

**Tallwood Terrace** had been **Allan Sturgis Drive**, named in honor of a salesman who left Barger's employment to seek greener pastures.

**Relee Road** was renamed **Edgewater Drive**, another defeat for Robert E. Lee who had been memorialized in the original street name.

**General Duff Drive**, honoring one of the first Lake Barcroft residents and an active community member, was changed by retiring the title and calling the street simply **Duff Drive**.

**Crosswoods Circle** replaced **DeLashmutt Circle**, which had been named for Basil DeLashmutt, the surveyor who had laid out the streets and lots for Colonel Barger.

**Farm Hill Circle**, never an actual circle, was divided into two names: the eastern portion was changed to **Farm Hill Drive** and the western leg to **Old Farm Road**.

**Lakeview Drive** and **Dearborn Drive** were changed to reflect their actual routes. Early maps show plans for Lakeview crossing over Holmes Run (where the footbridge is today), intersecting with Dearborn and extending to Crosswoods Drive. Because the causeway was never built, however, Lakeview now ends at the foot of Whispering Lane, and Dearborn continues to Crosswoods Drive.

**Malbrook Drive** was replaced by extending the western end of **Crosswoods Drive** to Dearborn Drive.

As LABARCA took over more and more control of the community, Colonel Barger turned his attention to the development of Tantallon, a lake community in Fort Washington, Maryland. His corporation, Barcroft Beach, Inc., still owned the lake and the dam in the 1960s. The colonel wanted to sell BBI to the residents, but his price was too high. Negotiations for the sale came to a standstill. Eventually, circumstances arose that made the purchase possible, and the lake became the property of the homeowners. As events would soon prove, this victory was not without its liabilities.

# "This Lake Is Your Lake"

In the sixties and early seventies, the residents of Lake Barcroft seized the opportunities to purchase both of Colonel Barger's remaining holdings – Barcroft Beach, Inc. and property on which to build a recreation center. Each homeowner was asked in 1970, to contribute \$300 to buy Barcroft Beach, Inc., which included the lake, dam, beaches and some common property. Even in those days, the price of ownership was a real bargain. Visionaries saw the prospect of buying BBI as a golden opportunity and pushed through the purchase, with only about 70 percent of homeowners participating. Now Lake Barcroft homes come with a lake. At the same time, the long-standing proposal to build a recreation center came up for approval by the membership. Diehard adherents overcame many obstacles to make another one of Colonel Barger's dreams a reality.

## Buying the Lake

The idea of purchasing the lake had been discussed for years. In 1964, Carrington Williams, LABARCA's legal counsel, informed the membership that Colonel Barger desired to sell the assets of BBI to the homeowners for \$1.6 million. At a meeting with Andrew Clark, Barger's attorney, Williams tried to negotiate a more reasonable figure. This failed. Williams then proposed the appointment of three independent examiners to appraise BBI's stock. Colonel Barger refused and negotiations ceased.



Carrington Williams

Five years later, on November 5, 1969, Colonel Barger passed away. Almost simultaneously, Charles Dockser, Barger's partner, also died. BBI now belonged in equal thirds to Dockser's two adult sons and to the Joseph Barger Estate. Ten days after Colonel Barger's death, LABARCA received word that the owners wanted to put their stock on the commercial market or perhaps to open the lake and beaches to the public. This may have been a ploy to establish a good price for the assets or to force Lake Barcroft residents to take action. Shortly thereafter, the owners offered to sell all the stock in BBI to Lake Barcroft homeowners for the non-negotiable price of \$300,000.

Myron Birnbaum, president of LABARCA, appointed Chris Murphy and Bill Arnold to co-chair a committee to look into the purchase, and on November 25, a general meeting of LABARCA members convened to discuss the matter. Strong resident arguments for buying the lake focused on the troubling alternatives to ownership, especially the concern that outside owners might not continue acceptable levels of maintenance and operation. The committee reminded those present that, according to homeowner covenants, residents had the right to use the lake, but it was not an exclusive right. Those in favor of the idea argued that owning the lake would give residents the right to operate it entirely for their own benefit. The members present at the meeting enthusiastically endorsed the concept and voted to authorize the expenditure of \$6,000 for an option to purchase the lake within the next few months.

The committee had a great deal to do and very little time to do it. Three major areas required in-depth study: technical issues, legal requirements and financial considerations. LABARCA sent out questionnaires to survey homeowners' initial reaction to the planned purchase; about one-third of the members responded, 85 percent favorably. With this support, LABARCA solicited pledges of \$300 from each homeowner and asked for voluntary prepayment of beach

fees, \$60 per year for up to ten years. Door-to-door solicitations, meetings, letters and newsletter articles ensued. By June 15, 1970, LABARCA had managed to get approximately 70 percent of the residents to agree to participate in the purchase. The \$300 contribution could not be legally enforced, but the \$60 annual maintenance fee was mandatory and gave the homeowner the right to use the lake regardless of ownership.

A July 5 deadline was set for remitting payment to the Lake Purchase Trustee, Millard Rice. At a special meeting on July 8, the subscribers voted to go forward with the sale, despite a considerable funding shortfall; hence, loans would be required to supplement the proceeds from the sale of stock.

The following approximate figures made up the final purchase price of BBI:

**Income**

Homeowners purchase of stock (723x\$300)	\$217,000
Bank loan	50,000
Two personal loans by residents	45,000
Prepaid beach fees	32,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$344,000</b>

**Disbursements**

R. Dockser	\$100,000
W. Dockser	100,000
Barger Estate	100,000
Repayment to LABARCA for options	6,000
BBI operating funds	27,000
Legal, auditing, & settlement fees	11,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$344,000</b>

Once the decision was made and the money collected, more residents contributed to the purchase. With just over one thousand lots, 100 percent participation would have financed the purchase, but only 81 additional subscribers had joined by 1986 when Bill Lowenthal took over the Membership Committee chair. Over the years, his efforts resulted in 163 additional contributors, but holdouts continued to resist participation. To mention one example, an army officer who lived in the community for more than twenty years never contributed, claiming to be a nonpermanent resident. After he passed away, his widow immediately paid the \$300. Today, with only seven holdouts, 1,024 members of the community association have paid the \$300.



**Myron Birnbaum**

**BARLAMA**

On September 21, 1970—less than a year after Colonel Barger’s death—ownership of the lake, the dam, beaches and property previously held by BBI passed into the residents’ hands. A new nonprofit corporation, the Barcroft Lake Management Association, Inc. (BARLAMA), purchased the stock of BBI, taking over its assets, which included each homeowner’s \$60 annual beach maintenance fee. The first president of BARLAMA, Al Trakowski, was assisted by corporation officers Bill Arnold, Eve Haughey and Millard Rice as well as directors Dave Alne, George Peckham, Myron Birnbaum, Phil Johnson and Cal Laning. These individuals, along with Stuart Finley, made up the Lake Purchase Committee

for the most part, but they were only a small number of more than one hundred volunteers who contributed their efforts to the purchase. The BARLAMA board appointed Cal Laning president, Bill Arnold vice president and Al Trakowski secretary-treasurer of BBI, the operating entity.

The purchase of the lake united the community, and a celebration took place in December: the 1970 Gala was billed as a “LABARCA/BARLAMA milestone . . . a nostalgic look into our past . . . to smile at our trials and tribulations.” John Wilkins scripted, produced and directed a whimsical and sometimes hilariously funny musical called *A Saga of Silt*. Myron Birnbaum’s song lyrics made the evening. At the finale, the entire audience—some three hundred strong—stood and joined the cast in singing the chorus of “This Lake Is Your Lake” to the tune of Woody Guthrie’s popular “This Land Is Your Land.”

*This lake is your lake,  
 This lake is my lake,  
 From the Tripps Run Causeway  
 To the Beach Three Island  
 From the Holmes Run Inlet  
 To the old dam spillway  
 This lake was made for you and me.*

Lake Barcroft’s homeowners were finally able to control their own destiny with regard to the lake’s operations. Ownership of the lake meant assuming the responsibilities heretofore borne by Colonel Barger, but it also increased social opportunities for the new owners. One positive result of the purchase included a very successful beach cleanup and maintenance campaign in the spring of 1971. Dozens of residents, young and old, repaired lifeguard stands, fences and docks, thereby demonstrating a new sense of personal responsibility toward

their acquisition. In addition, ownership allowed the lake, beaches and common property to be used for social events. In July 1971, the first big beach party was held, featuring a roast pig luau dinner at Beach 5. In August, nineteen party barges took part in the first annual Barge Party, which was hosted by Eve and John Haughey at 6110 Beachway Drive. A Beach Bake at the Beach 3 peninsula followed in September. Thus, the citizens had come together, worked hard and contributed cash to attain the goal of lake ownership, all in a relatively short time. Now they could enjoy the benefits of that achievement.



**Beach 1 Cleaner-Uppers**

### **Building the Recreation Center**

In 1964, at the same time that LABARCA was considering Colonel Barger's offer to sell the lake for \$1.6 million, Barger started planning the development of an area behind Beach 2 known as Parcel A, a fifteen-acre tract that belonged jointly to Barger and Dockser. However, two restrictive covenants in the land title that was recorded in 1952 designated that Parcel A was to be used for "the purpose of a beach and appropriate accessory uses thereto," and that "no residence may be erected on said land." Some residents saw this provision as an opportunity to build a recreation center to be used for Swim Team activities, tennis matches and community meetings. In fall 1966, Barger entered into a written, binding agreement with LABARCA, giving it the option to purchase the tract for

\$100,000. Two years later, at a general meeting of LABARCA, the members present voted—nearly unanimously—to go ahead with plans to build a recreation facility on Parcel A.

LABARCA proceeded with planning. The concept initially included some residential development of the land to pay for the property, associated roads and for drainage. The planners believed that the restrictive covenants on Parcel A could be removed if all Lake Barcroft residents agreed to do so. It soon became clear, however, that owners of homes adjacent to but outside the Lake Barcroft community and Barcrofters living near Parcel A were adamantly opposed to the idea. In addition, the association's Legal Committee reported several other possible stumbling blocks. The most important centered on

- (1) LABARCA's ability to raise the capital necessary to buy the land and build the facility, (2) the need for the association to obtain a court order to remove one of the covenants and to acquire an insurable title to the property, and, (3) the implications of non-Barcroft residents' use of the recreation center.

To resolve the major issues, LABARCA's Board of Directors requested the formation of two distinct entities that would be responsible for developing the recreation center. One, the Lake Barcroft Recreation Corporation, (Rec Corp) headed by Dan Lecos, was chartered to take title to the property and to construct the facilities. Stock ownership was restricted to Lake Barcroft residents and lot owners for several reasons: (1) to raise capital from within the community, (2) to retain community control of the property, and (3) to coordinate community action aimed at removing one of the covenants. In effect, this measure kept



**A pool party at the Rec Center**



all ownership and business decisions within the Lake Barcroft community.

The second entity, the Lake Barcroft Recreation Center, Inc., was set up as a nonprofit, nonstock, membership-only Virginia corporation, much like other social organizations. Rec Center, Inc., as it was called, was responsible for leasing the property and operating the center. With Ben Morriss serving as president, its responsibilities included obtaining a special use permit from the Fairfax County Board of Zoning Appeals. Because of the recreation center's potential impact on non-Barcroft residents, the use permit opened membership to people outside the community. However, the Recreation Corporation retained ownership control within Lake Barcroft (not to be confused with the Rec Center, Inc. mentioned above).

Legal and financing problems, and the death of both owners, delayed the sale of the property until July 1971. It took



use permit, in effect putting occupancy on hold pending legal appeals. The center finally opened in May 1974.

\* \* \*

The efforts to buy the lake and to build a recreation center clearly demonstrated the community's ability to overcome problems and work together for the common good. The next chapter in Lake Barcroft's history dwarfed these achievements. In June 1972, Hurricane Agnes hit and washed away earthen portions of the dam structure, emptying the lake. The new owners faced the daunting task of devising a plan to finance dam repairs and dredge storm runoff from the lake. The endeavor would test the skills of a variety of participants, all



another year for the architect, David Gallagher, to obtain county approval of the site plan, solicit bids and negotiate a construction contract. Finally, on August 17, 1972, the long-awaited ceremony took place—the groundbreaking for the Lake Barcroft Recreation Center.

In the meantime, board members of the Rec Center, Inc., which would operate the center, busily conducted membership drives and offered discounted rates for early enrollment. Construction of the recreation center encountered difficulties ranging from bad weather to an unexpected vein of hard rock that required blasting. To add to these setbacks, the county stepped in and voided the

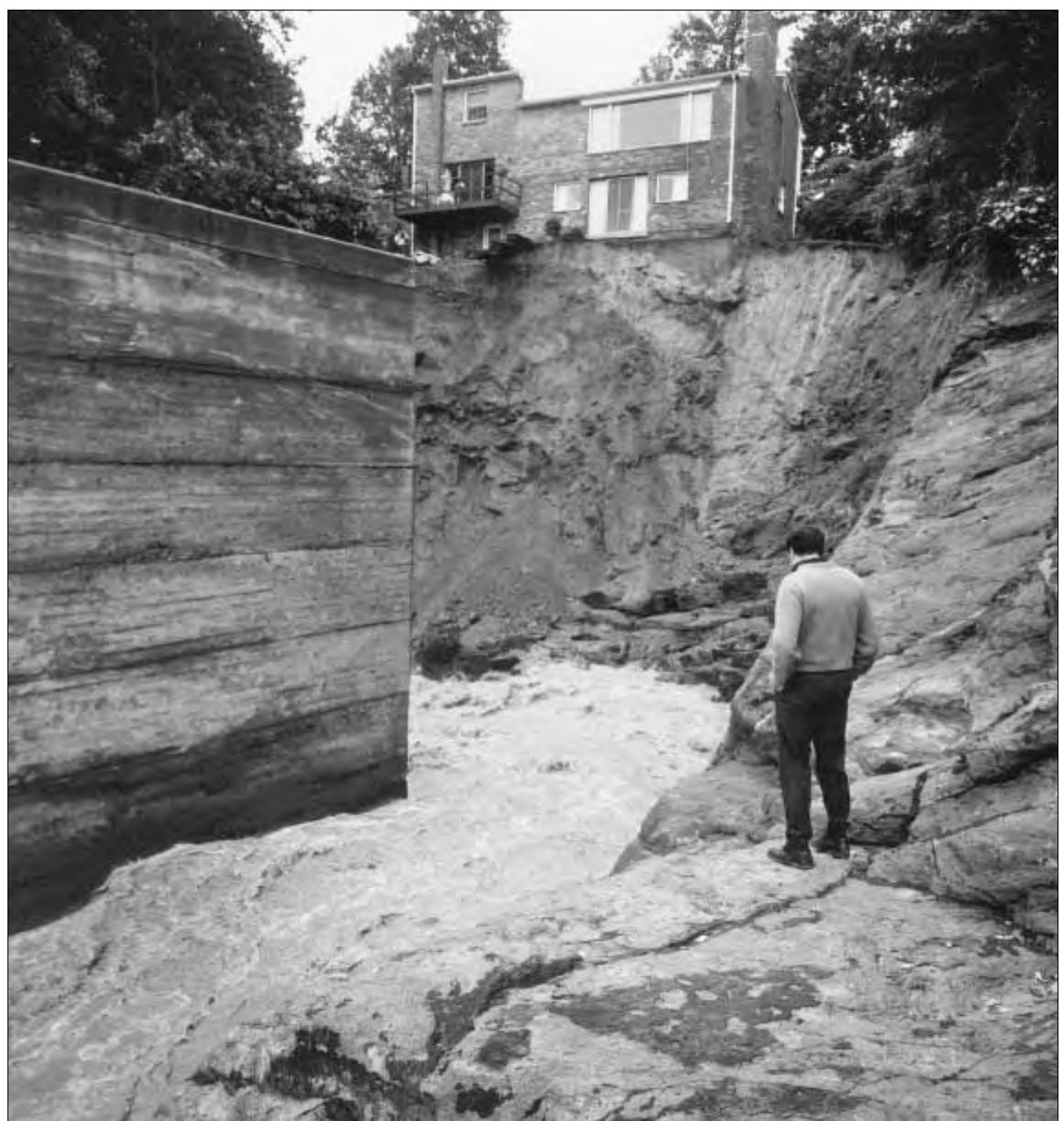


CHAPTER NINE  
**Hurricane Agnes**



The morning of Wednesday, June 21, 1972, dawned with overcast skies and a precipitation forecast of 80 percent. Nothing unusual. A minor hurricane, designated Agnes, had battered and flooded portions of the Southeast but had lost intensity and was downgraded to a tropical depression. As it barreled up the East Coast, the storm

gathered both strength and moisture from the Atlantic waters and regained tropical storm intensity when it reached the Virginia coast. That evening, it became clear that far more than a storm had hit; by ten o'clock, well-drained roads were six inches deep in water. At about eleven o'clock, the radio reported a breach in the Lake Barcroft dam. It took ten hours



Hurricane Agnes over-topped the Barcroft Dam eroding away an earthen section which exposed Jack Perkins' basement. (June 22, 1972)

for the lake to drain substantially, and residents woke up to find their lake empty. In its place was a depressing mud hole.

Nine inches of rain fell between the afternoon of June 20 and the morning of June 22—four inches during just three hours on the night of the June 21. In terms of rainfall alone, Agnes forced nearly every creek and stream in the central portion of the state over its banks, claiming thirteen lives and causing \$222 million in damage. Probably the worst storm ever to hit the dam, the downpour overtopped the dam spillway by three feet. The initial breach occurred at the western, earthen shoulder of the dam at 6200 Lakeview Drive. The rush of water quickly deepened the washout, but finally, the water level stabilized forty feet below the top of the dam. Fortunately, the slow erosion protected downstream interests from the wall of water that would have resulted from a total dam collapse.

### **Damage Assessment**

The call to action was immediate. On Thursday, after the rain had subsided, the situation at the dam was assessed by representatives of the county, state and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as well as by consulting engineer, Jack Gillett. That evening, seventeen residents active in lake affairs met and quickly agreed that the dam had to be repaired. The attendees spent the remainder of the meeting discussing how to fund the repair and what kind of governmental approval would be needed. To keep residents informed, Myron Birnbaum published special mimeographed issues of the newsletter, which covered the situation as well as the actions taken by various committees. The first issue of the Lake Barcroft Mini-Newsletter appeared just thirty-six hours after the washout.

The situation was confusing for Lake Barcroft residents whose emotions ranged from dismay to anger. Everyone had ideas, mostly about ways to shift the anticipated cost of repairing the dam to someone else. The community did, however, have a few resources of its own. LABARCA had a taxing district, called the Lake Barcroft Local District, which was managed jointly by the chairman of the association's Engineering Committee, Stuart Finley, and a representative of Fairfax County's Department of Public Works, Jack Liedl. At the time, it had approximately \$75,000 in its treasury for operations. The second resource, Barcroft Lake Management Association, Inc., (BARLAMA), had been created to buy the lake and controlled the assets needed to operate both the lake and the dam; but BARLAMA was actually in debt from loans to purchase the lake. Whitman, Requardt Associates, Inc., a major regional engineering firm in Baltimore, served as the engineering consultant to LABARCA's local taxing district; Jack Gillett, a partner in the firm with extensive experience in dam construction and operations, was LABARCA's primary contact.

### **Public Reaction**

The search for outside funding began immediately. Liaison with county and state agencies was spotty at best. Stuart Finley was on the Board of Directors of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVS&WCD) and had solid ties to the Virginia Water Control Board. But the Lake Barcroft dam disaster had created a massive public relations backlash, which was fueled by negative newspaper articles and editorials railing against any public funding for repairing the dam. The press coverage intimidated politicians and local officials, who might otherwise have been inclined to help.

On July 5, some seven hundred residents attended a special meeting at J.E.B Stuart High School to hear a report on the emergency facing Lake Barcroft. Dave Alne, vice president of BARLAMA, set the keynote for the evening by calling for restoration of the lake, improvement of facilities and preservation of health and safety. Other presentations addressed major issues, such as County Executive George Kelley's blunt appraisal that it would take at least two years to repair the dam and his dire pronouncement that county money could not be used to finance private, recreational uses by Lake Barcroft residents. For their part, members of the audience clearly indicated their opposition to any solution that would open the lake for use by the general public. During a spirited question-and-answer period, residents made a case for a reduction in their property taxes as a result of the decreased value of homes situated around a dry lakebed.

At the meeting, engineer Jack Gillett estimated that it would take three months to prepare a preliminary report of the damage, seven months to remove the vast quantities of silt deposited by Hurricane Agnes and nine months to do long-range planning. After Gillett was pressured to expedite the process, the preliminary damage assessment was issued in four days. Fortunately, the study reported that the masonry section of the dam had not sustained any structural damage. Before starting work on the dam and removing the silt, a stuck valve at the bottom of the dam had to be opened so that the remainder of the lake could be drained. To accomplish this task, Cal Laning, a retired U.S. Navy admiral and BBI manager, dangled in a boatswain's chair at the end of a sixty-foot rope to free the valve. And Cal was sixty-eight years old at the time!

By August 1, more questions had arisen. At a second emergency community meeting chaired by John Haughey, president of BARLAMA, Stuart Finley spoke about the necessity to petition the state to impound water to fill the lake. Finley cautioned that the \$300,000 that was estimated for restoring the dam to its former status might not meet the court's requirements for a more elaborate spillway and for other improvements. After all, the storm had also flooded some downstream properties located in the floodplain. The Parklawn Recreation Association sued BARLAMA and BBI,



accusing them of failing to prevent floodwaters from damaging their properties. Something would have to be done to prevent such a reoccurrence.

### **Search for Funding**

Funding was the most pressing issue discussed at the meeting. Possible sources included a loan from the Small Business Administration (SBA), a U.S. Army Corps of Engineer contract through an Office of Emergency Preparedness grant, a

Local District increase in the tax rate, insurance proceeds and, possibly, direct contributions from the residents. Representative Bob Leggett (D-Calif.), a Lake Barcroft resident, pushed for an SBA loan to BARLAMA. In a follow-up action, County Executive Kelley proposed that Fairfax County grant \$764,000 as a partial loan and advance local district taxes so that future revenues could be used on the present crisis. Strong public reaction to the proposal prompted the county's Board of Supervisors to cancel a public hearing and to table the proposal indefinitely. As quoted in a

Washington Post article, entitled “No Fairfax Funds for Barcroft: Citizen Anger Halts Lake Aid,” Supervisor Jack Herrity of Springfield stated: “People don’t want their money going to the rich.”

Mason District Supervisor Alan Magazine attributed the public response to media reports that falsely implied that some of the money would be a gift from county taxpayers. In the same Post article, Magazine explained that half of the money would be a standard 4 percent loan, and the rest an advance on Lake Barcroft Local District tax funds due to the community. Magazine also noted that, without the lake, a downwardly revised property tax assessment could cost the county up to \$200,000 a year in lost revenue. Also in the article, Stuart Finley pointed out that 80 percent of the funds needed for repairing the dam would be spent to protect downstream properties from uncontrolled floodwaters. Finley made a strong case that the sediment in the lake belonged to the county, and it was therefore the county’s responsibility to remove it. The county, of course, never acknowledged this argument.

The arguments about funding eventually reached the floor of the U.S. Congress. The House Select Committee on Small Business wrote to the SBA administrator opposing Lake Barcroft’s application for a \$500,000 SBA loan to repair flood damage to the lake. In explaining its decision, the committee wrote that “the use of federal public funds, whether by grant or loan, to provide recreational and land value opportunities at a reservoir or lake for citizens or organizations that exclude the general public should be avoided.” The committee’s conclusion in turn triggered a speech in the House of Representatives by John Rarick of Louisiana, who labeled these actions reverse discrimination. In the weeks following the community’s second emergency meeting, it became increasingly clear that a mechanism had to be found that would enable Barcrofters to finance reconstruction themselves.

### **Watershed Improvement District**

Stuart Finley’s position on the Board of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District was fortuitous. Having been chairman, Finley was particularly attuned to the state’s laws regulating water and had studied the Virginia code pertaining to water conservation. One day, while chatting with Charlie Koch—then executive director of the NVS&WCD—about the terrible problem facing Lake Barcroft, Finley suddenly recalled an obscure law that allowed establishing a Watershed Improvement District (WID): a WID could be created to preserve land endangered by silting and sedimentation from stream channels. Finley raced home to review the advantages and requirements of a WID in private.

By establishing a WID, the district could levy taxes for its purposes—in this case, restoration of the lake—and issue bonds. Unlike the Local District that collected taxes for

dredging, a WID would not be under the control of the County Board of Supervisors. Instead, the WID would be governed by the NVS&WCD and administered by three landowners appointed by that agency to serve as trustees. The creation of a WID and the passage of the tax and bond issue required affirmative votes by all of the following: (1) a majority of the qualified resident voters, (2) two-thirds of the landowners, and (3) two-thirds of the landowners representing two-thirds of the land area. The real challenge for the association would be getting landowners out to vote; the failure to vote would, in effect, count as a negative vote.

By October, Whitman and Requardt had prepared a study for long-range improvements to the dam. The principal points guiding the study called for stability against major storms such as Agnes, the need for a fairly constant water level, and economics. At a meeting with the LABARCA Engineering Committee, Jack Gillett presented three designs: (1) restoration of the status quo, (2) a fixed dam, and (3) a dam with automatically controlled gates. He recommended the latter and the committee agreed, opting for a hinged Bascule gate mounted in a 150-foot by 12-foot notch that would be blasted into the top of the dam. With this design, when the water level rises, a float sends a signal to the operating mechanism to lower the gate, and the gate then rotates on its hinge, allowing water to flow over the gate. The operation is electrically controlled, hydraulically activated and completely automatic.

The NVS&WCD Board of Directors held a hearing on November 15 to determine the need to establish a Watershed Improvement District for Lake Barcroft. Ed Pritchard, BARLAMA’s attorney, presented the petitions that were gathered in favor of establishing a WID. He explained the proposal and emphasized that the state’s attorney general supported creating such a district for Lake Barcroft. The board approved the petition and authorized the next steps toward formation of the requested WID. Almost simultaneously, SBA approved the \$500,000 loan, with one unexpected provision: that no funds be advanced unless the project’s completion could be assured. The SBA loan therefore hinged on the creation of the WID, landowners’ referendum approving its formation and certification by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

On November 30, Fairfax County Circuit Court Judge Bernard Jennings conducted a hearing on Lake Barcroft’s petition to impound, that is, the request for authorization to reconstruct and improve the dam and, as a result, to impound water in Lake Barcroft. Jack Gillett testified for two hours on the plans for repairing the dam and installing the Bascule gate. Three downstream adversaries of the proposal—the city of Alexandria, the Parklawn Recreation Association and a warehouse owner—disagreed with the plan that Gillett presented and asked for further study. In the end, Judge Jennings granted Lake Barcroft’s petition and ordered a decree



**WID Special Election (April 24, 1973)**

authorizing the reconstruction and improvement of the dam in accordance with the plans that had been submitted.

One by one, the hurdles were cleared. The next issues facing the residents centered on three referendums. The first required landowners to mail in advisory ballots to the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District indicating their approval of the proposed WID. By the end of January 1973, 892 residents had voted, with an overwhelming 98 percent approval rate. As a result of that show of support, the NVS&WCD created the Lake Barcroft WID on January 31, 1973, and petitioned the circuit court of Fairfax County to conduct a poll that would: (1) further ratify the creation of the WID, (2) authorize a tax increase, and (3) sanction bonded indebtedness of up to \$2 million.

### **The WID Vote**

After considerable legal battles on where and when to vote and who could participate in the voting, the big day—April 24—arrived. LABARCA, under the leadership of George Overby, shouldered the responsibility to get out the vote. A battalion of members, organized by section and block, canvassed neighborhoods. A last-minute Mini-Newsletter emphasized that “No vote is a no vote.” The polls opened at Belvedere School on Columbia Pike at six o’clock in the morning under the watchful eyes of Woman’s Club volunteers. Other club members served as poll watchers, baby-sitters, drivers and telephone callers. The association made every conceivable

attempt to produce a strong turnout, and their efforts were successful. For example, several residents who were unable to walk voted at the curb; and a female resident on the way to the hospital arrived on a stretcher to cast her vote.

The polls closed at seven o’clock in the evening. Within minutes, residents began sorting, checking and counting ballots. Fifty or so of those most deeply involved in the campaign gathered at Il Castillo for refreshments and dinner while awaiting the results, which were finalized around midnight. The May newsletter was able to report success under the headline: “WE MADE IT!” Of those voting, the

response was overwhelmingly positive—between 98.4 and 99.4 percent casting their ballots for the WID, and therefore a self-imposed tax. Even if invalidated ballots, no-shows and unreturned absentee ballots were considered negative votes, all three referendums passed by margins of approximately 20 percent. To celebrate, LABARCA sponsored a party on May 4 at the Gerbers’ home on Crosswoods Drive, where the USS Dam Victory was floating in the pool, flying a banner that said “For Those Who Give a Dam.”

With funding assured by the results of the referendum, work to repair the dam could begin. It had taken a year of concerted effort to arrive at this point, and the victory marked the community’s greatest success to date. The newsletter’s editor, Myron Birnbaum, praised Stuart Finley “for identifying the Watershed Improvement District provisions of the Virginia statutes as a means for financing lake restoration,” and reminded readers that “he shepherded and masterminded the enterprise every step of the way.” John Haughey, president of BARLAMA, received Birnbaum’s kudos “for his magnificent job of detailed planning and community leadership in carrying through the all important Second Referendum.”



One section of the new, 150-foot Bascule Gate being lifted onto the Barcroft dam by crane. (*February 28, 1974*)



# A New Beginning

**A**s a result of the April 24, 1973, referendum, Lake Barcroft's residents voted overwhelmingly to create a Watershed Improvement District (WID) for dam repairs and silt removal. On May 18, the circuit court found the WID to be validly established under the provisions of the Virginia code and approved the issuance of WID bonds. The community could take pride in the unified way the residents responded. It was not easy to raise new taxes, but the solid support for the referendum demonstrated the community's commitment to overcome adversity and start over.

## The WID

Virginia's Watershed Improvement Act, passed in 1955, had never been used before the Lake Barcroft WID was formed. The act allows an area within a soil and water conservation district to form a special governmental unit outside the control of the county government. A WID is authorized to perform certain administrative functions, to levy taxes and to borrow money. The governing body of the newly created WID—the board of directors of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District—appointed three Lake Barcroft landowners as Lake Barcroft WID trustees. The Board delegated to these trustees the authority to make the day-to-day decisions necessary for operating the lake. In addition, the trustees assumed the responsibility for estimating the annual operating budget to provide the basis for the supplemental tax levy on the Lake Barcroft community. General oversight of the WID is exercised by the state and the NVS&WCD.

Prior to the formation of the WID, the Barcroft Lake Management Association had directed the dam, lake and beach maintenance operations of its subsidiary, Barcroft Beach, Inc. Funding for BBI operations came from the annual \$60 maintenance fee paid by each homeowner. After the WID was established, the relationship between the WID and BBI had to be recognized and defined. To this end, the BBI board and the WID trustees signed an agreement giving WID the right to conduct operations on BBI properties. WID funds could be allocated for any reasonable purpose that supported soil and water conservation, but money could not be used for recreational purposes. With the agreement in place, the responsibility for dam repair and silt removal passed to the WID trustees.

When the WID was approved in January 1973, a slate of ten candidates was nominated for the three trustee slots. Edwin

Deagle was chosen as one of the first trustees. Edwin had written his Ph.D. dissertation on the difficulties associated with small municipal bond issues. His background and expertise clearly aided the trustees in addressing the next challenge—raising \$2 million by selling tax-exempt bonds. Navy Captain Dick Anderson, a specialist in Navy contracting, was also selected as a trustee. When the nomination list was first published, Sandy Augliere noted that all the nominees were men and proposed that a female be included. She suggested Sally Determan, a distinguished lawyer, who was chosen and eventually became trustee chairperson.

At a May 2 meeting of BARLAMA, the board elected Dave Alne president. One of Alne's major responsibilities was to maintain liaison with the WID trustees; other board members were assigned to work with LABARCA, BBI, Fairfax County and local communities. The overlapping activities of various organizations required close coordination to avoid mutual interference. Alne initiated several programs, then, as WID funds became available, he handed off responsibility for the projects to the WID trustees. The silt removal plan was a good example; a significant amount of planning was done before the WID trustees began to solicit contracts for the work. BARLAMA also planned extensive improvements to the beaches.

## The Bond Issue

On June 19, WID trustee Sally Determan and several other residents gathered in a brokerage office in Rosslyn, where they were connected to Richmond by telephone. At noon, bids for the WID bonds were opened in the Virginia state treasurer's office, and \$1.5 million of the bonds sold at an average interest rate of 5.744 percent. BBI purchased another \$500,000 worth of WID bonds, using an SBA loan in the same amount. Because the SBA loan carried an interest rate of only 1 percent, the interest for the entire \$2 million bond issue averaged 4.55 percent, a very good rate at that time. The trustees cleverly invested the funds in federal bank notes yielding 7 percent or more and timed their maturity to coincide with payments due on WID contracts. Bondholders collected interest, while principal payments were put into a fund to pay off the bonds at their expiration. Interest and principal payments on the bonds owned by BBI were in turn used to regularly pay the Small Business Administration, retiring the original SBA loan on schedule. The last of the bonds expired in spring 2001.



Under the Local District fund, the special tax for lake maintenance that was levied on Lake Barcroft residents had been 40¢ per \$100 of assessed value. On July 1, 1973, the new tax rate went into effect and jumped to \$1.00 per \$100 of assessed value, which in those days was 40 percent of market value. This special tax is paid in addition to the real estate taxes levied by Fairfax County and is collected by the county and then conveyed to the WID. The law requires that the tax rate be set at a level that at least pays the annual indebtedness on the WID bonds. The Local District fund was ultimately folded into the WID fund, creating one special assessment. This is the system by which the WID operates today.

Another source of possible income centered on a \$680,000 insurance policy on the dam, which was an asset of debatable value in the wake of Hurricane Agnes. The policy covered a concrete and masonry dam that had sustained little damage. The insurance company argued that the damage to areas adjacent to the dam was not covered. After BBI filed suit in circuit court, the insurance carrier offered between \$8,000 and \$10,000 to pay for damage to the concrete apron, but BBI rejected the token settlement. As the trial approached, the insurance company started serious negotiations, and BBI eventually accepted a compromise offer of \$170,000, which, in accordance with the terms of the SBA loan, was used to reduce debt principal.

### **Restoring the Lake**

To finance preliminary planning and contractual obligations, the county transferred \$60,000 in Lake Barcroft Local District funds to the WID. The WID funded a joint effort by the



consulting engineers and the Allis-Chalmers Corporation to design the Bascule gate and to modify the dam. In July 1973, as WID funds became available, fabrication of the Bascule floodgate started at the Allis-Chalmers plant in York, Pennsylvania. The design called for a 150-foot by 12-foot hydraulically operated gate that would be able to handle storms more powerful than Agnes. The workers at the plant referred to it as "Lake Barcroft's Watergate," and added, "it won't leak." This was a not so subtle reference to the Watergate scandal that was unfolding at the time, which was marked by numerous stories leaked to the press. Fabrication of the gate and modification of the dam required careful planning. To meet a promise to revive Lake Barcroft by summer 1974, the trustees set a target date of April 30 for completion of the floodgate project. If the work was not completed by then, the contractor would be penalized \$1,000 per day for up to thirty days.

While committees and individuals worked on various projects, vegetation was growing on the lake bottom. Several enterprising residents seized the opportunity to plant vegetables in the fertile soil, reminiscent of World War II victory gardens. According to one apocryphal story, two youngsters, noted for their indolence, exhibited a great deal of energy in preparing, cultivating and planting their garden in the lakebed. It was the first sign that the boys were actually taking an active interest in something so mundane. In the end, their crop flourished, but alas, the plants turned out to be marijuana.

In July, the WID trustees leased a Mud Cat dredge to remove silt from the base of the dam. The operator sucked up the silt and pumped it to a receiving basin on the lakebed. Tree stumps, sunken boats and even car parts jammed the sluice valve. Once workers cleared the sluice, the remaining water



drained into the stream below the dam. Work then began to fill in the washouts at the ends of the dam. The contractor positioned a custom-made cage over the sluice, thereby preventing further obstruction. This operation was so successful that the WID trustees eventually purchased a Mud Cat for the community and hired an operator to pump silt into decanting basins.

By mid-August 1973, residents could see visible progress in the restoration of the washout and the removal of silt from the lake. These efforts proceeded apace during the summer and fall. Front-end loaders scooped dry silt into trucks and cleaned out coves that had been clogged by the discharge from storm drains. The contractor worked long hours to complete the land excavation before the arrival of freezing weather. As many as fifty trucks at a time carted away silt and moved fill to the earthen sections at the ends of the dam.

By November of that year, the washouts were completely restored. This allowed for partial filling, which would not interfere with dam modifications and installation of the Bascule gate. Even though the lake's level was below the normal water line, it still spawned visions of winter ice-skating and summer swimming. This step





**Stu Finley, Dave Alne, Sally Determan and Congressman Tom Davis. An original trustee, lawyer Sally resolved many of WID's early legal problems. (June 24, 2001)**

forward also inspired plans for improving the beaches, including redesigning the parking lots, sanding extensively, installing boat racks and erecting a large, deep-water diving tower at Beach 4. Lakeside residents were encouraged to repair bulkheads; and ads for concrete Lincoln Logs appeared in the *Lake Barcroft Newsletter* along with instructions on how to construct a seawall.

The idea of a diving tower sparked some controversy within the community and indicated that a conflict could exist between two community organizations. As part of an overall plan proposed by a landscape architect, construction of a diving platform did not meet any opposition at the September BARLAMA meeting. In November, however, a resident raised an objection at a LABARCA meeting and later wrote: "There is a railroading tactic, an effort to run roughshod, if you will, over the entire body of the lake owners to accomplish this construction." This was an unfortunate accusation, but Dave Alne showed his fair and firm leadership by making it clear that the platform would not be built without the support of Lake Barcroft residents. To get residents' feedback, a mail-in coupon was inserted into the *Lake Barcroft Newsletter*, thereby enabling residents to express their opinions. Although not a political issue per se, the platform, pardon the pun, was soundly defeated.

Lloyd Swift and Rex Chaney assumed the responsibility for restocking the lake, with valuable advice from Robert Martin, a state official and noted expert on fishing. Steps taken during the restoration of the lake created fish habitats by deepening the shoreline, removing silt and revitalizing the silt basins. On April 30, 1974, under Lloyd Swift's direction, adult species of bluegills, red-ear sunfish, channel catfish and fathead

minnows, along with five thousand immature large-mouth bass, were released into the water at Beaches 1 and 4. Thus, desirable predator dominance was established, with the maturing bass feeding on the offspring of the adult bluegills and sunfish. By October, after the lake had been filled, twenty bass were caught and released; in six months, the same bass had grown from a length of four inches to eleven, demonstrating the ecological soundness of the lake.

## **A New Dam**

During the winter and spring of 1973-74, contractors started the final phase of the dam restoration. The installation of the Bascule gate required careful preparation. The dam, built to exceptional specifications in 1913, was constructed of cyclopean masonry, which is concrete that contains

stones weighing one hundred pounds or more. Dynamite blasted a 150-foot notch out of the hard surface on the top of the dam, where the spillway and the old gates had been located. The front or downstream side of the dam was heavily scaffolded, and four slits were cut into the dam face for installation of the hydraulic pistons that would raise and lower the gate. Huge cranes then hoisted the gate and pistons into place. Once installed, electrical connections energized the control mechanisms that were located in a secure building on the dam. In late April, once everything was in place, the sluices were closed and the lake began to fill. With the new automatic dam in operation, the water level rose slowly but surely. In fact, when Admiral Cal Laning, BBI's manager, was asked how long it would take to fill the lake, he reportedly replied, "Give me another Agnes—about fifteen minutes." The process was constrained by an impoundment provision that the lake had to continuously discharge an amount of water equal to average inflow. A few above-average storms filled the lake by mid-summer.

Some might say that Hurricane Agnes was the best thing that ever happened to Lake Barcroft. A sixty-year-old dam now conformed to 1974 specifications. The silt removal program hauled away about ninety thousand cubic yards of muck and gave birth to a plan for long-term sediment control. At Beaches 3 and 5, decanting basins improved silt control and are still operating successfully. The water quality improved and the fishing promised to be better than ever. Finally, with the WID in place, funds became available for programs ranging from gypsy moth control to lake water aeration. The two-year Agnes recovery saga was a remarkable achievement for the community. It signaled a new beginning.

# The Second Generation

According to demographers, a generation consists of the thirty years it takes for a newborn to reach maturity. Thus, the late 1970s and early 1980s marked the beginning of Lake Barcroft's second generation. From 1950 to 1975, the community progressed through all the stages of growing up: Lake Barcroft developed from a wilderness into a modern, residential community; residents formed organizations to fulfill their needs and desires; the community purchased the lake and upgraded the dam; and property owners approved a special tax assessment that provided a continuous funding stream that would ensure maintenance of the lake as well as the surroundings. The first generation of Barcrofters bequeathed a legacy of dedication to keeping the lake alive and the community involved. For the next twenty-five years, the second generation faced the prospect of maintaining the community on a steady course.

After Hurricane Agnes and the restoration of the dam, the lake once again became a magnet for social activities. Barge parties, the revitalized Sailing Club's Sunday regattas, Fourth of July fireworks and Labor Day sports competitions all marked the return of the residents' lives to normal. The organizations responsible for managing the community continued under the guidance of dedicated individuals, but not without major changes. During the second twenty-five years, the environment—both man-made and natural—had its ups and downs, but overall it improved, because the residents were able to rekindle the spirit needed to maintain Lake Barcroft as a unique place to live. This chapter attempts to briefly chronicle lake history from 1975 to 2000 by focusing on social, community and environmental issues.

## Social Activities

The lifestyle in Lake Barcroft offers something for everyone. One group, the Lake Barcroft Woman's Club, has been providing services to its members as well as to the community since 1955. The Newcomer's Club Welcoming Committee for new residents and periodic social events have helped that organization flourish; membership in the club is often an individual's first step in community involvement. Members of the Barcrofters, a social organization, plan and organize parties and outings. In the mid-1970s, Joe Theismann, the popular and outgoing Redskins' quarterback, opened a restaurant at Bailey's Crossroads, which became a popular community watering hole. Theismann contributed his considerable talents as auctioneer at fund-raisers sponsored by the Woman's Club,

and his restaurant provided prizes for Labor Day events. Other memorable outdoor luaus and picnics coordinated by Trippi Penland provided an opportunity for residents to celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of Lake Barcroft in November 1986, the fortieth in November 1991 and the fiftieth in October 2000.

During the seventies and eighties, several stage shows featured talented Barcrofters. In January 1976, Jerry Meyer produced and Naomi Zeavin directed *Barney's Place*, a musical extravaganza spanning the twenties, forties and sixties. Jerry gave an outstanding performance imitating Elvis Presley for his ecstatic teenybopper audience, including Jerrie Manteau, Sally Trebbe, Jean Meyer and Jeanne Fellows. This show was so successful, it was repeated during the Woman's Club's Arts '76 Festival. A sort of sequel—*Barney Goes to München*—was performed by the same cast at the Oktoberfest held at St. Anthony's Church. Naomi Zeavin, an accomplished actress and gracious neighbor, wrote, directed and produced several shows: *Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter* in 1974, *Cabaret* in 1977, *Let's Take a Trip* in 1979, *Ego-Mania* in 1983, *Don't Call Us, We'll Call You* in 1988 and *This Is My Life* in 1990.



Jerry Meyer does his Elvis thing

An abundance of hidden talent, waiting for the right opportunity, surfaced during all these performances, which were staged at local high schools.

In the late 1980s, from his conversations at cocktail parties, Dave Alne realized that a large number of impressive personalities with fascinating careers resided in Lake Barcroft. As a result, he started the Barcroft Fourth Thursday Group, a forum for distinguished residents to share their knowledge and experience with their neighbors. The first session featured Larry Fox, a noted authority on international economics, who led a discussion on the fall of the Berlin Wall and European politics. Over the next three years, subjects covered at the gatherings ranged from science, to history, psychology, music, government, business and beyond. Personages included Dr. Jerome Karle, a Nobel laureate in chemistry, Tom Donlan, an editor at Barron's, Leon Fuerth, an assistant to the vice president for national security as well as various professors and book authors.

### Community Organizations

Until 1991, three organizations shared responsibilities for community affairs and lake maintenance: the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District (LBWID), the Lake Barcroft Community Association and Barcroft Lake Management Association. LBWID—originally created as a governmental agency to deal with the emergency repair of the washed out dam—gradually evolved into an environmental service agency. This metamorphosis came about after early, rigid interpretations of the Virginia code gave way to more realistic

assessments of WID functions. After decades of working experience, the WID's operational purview has expanded from a narrow focus on issues involving soil and water to broad, community-wide environmental concerns.

The Board of Directors of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District appointed three trustees to oversee the day-to-day operations of the LBWID when it was first created in 1973. Appointed a trustee in 1976, Dave Alne became trustee chairman in July 1977 and has continued in that post to the present, a tenure lasting twenty-three years and counting. Beginning in the early sixties, Stuart Finley was a director on the board of the NVS&WCD for twelve years, six as chairman. Shortly after the creation of the LBWID, counsel advised Stuart that his volunteer activities assisting the LBWID constituted a conflict of interest; accordingly, Finley resigned his directorship on the NVS&WCD board. He continued his volunteer management role as a consultant to LBWID until 1988, when he was retained as the WID's director of operations. For the last quarter-century, Dave Alne and Stuart Finley have been the driving forces behind the stunning record of the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District.

The trustees continue to control LBWID operations under the direction of the NVS&WCD board. At present, aside from the review and approval of the budget and the appointment of trustees by the NVS&WCD, the LBWID runs itself. In 1976, the trustees asked several residents to become LBWID associates, a new category of volunteers who assist the trustees in the operation of the lake. With expertise in various disciplines, the WID associates attend meetings held by the LBWID trustees but do not vote on issues.

The LBWID has been responsible for a wide range of improvements: dredging is the most visible WID operation—and the most expensive; the aeration system turns over the water in the lake, creating cleaner water by aerating sediments at the bottom; upstream silt traps and diversion debris traps help to control pollution; street cleaning removes tons of contaminants that would otherwise wash into the lake. WID employees stabilize stream banks and monitor water quality. The LBWID provides nonphosphate fertilizer for purchase, including



Jack Keith, Lloyd Swift, Fred Chanania, Freeman Williams, Dave Alne, Waltraut Nelson, Dick Werling, Stu Finley, Walter Cate, Ki Faulkner. (October 1986)

delivery, as just one means of controlling algae. In addition, LBWID issues bulletins covering such diverse topics as instructions on building a seawall, the basics of lawn care, composting, gypsy moth control and control of geese. The list of LBWID's responsibilities is long, but all of them are directed at safeguarding the Lake Barcroft watershed and ultimately Chesapeake Bay.

Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act provides for the development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control nonpoint, that is general, pollution. As a result of the tireless efforts of LBWID's trustees and director of operations, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued 319 grants to the WID for implementation of practices appropriate for use by older urban communities elsewhere in America. Various agencies and landowners cooperated to undertake projects in the entire upstream 14.5-square-mile watershed. Between 1995 and 2000, the total contributions by the EPA (60 percent) and LBWID (40 percent) that were used to demonstrate urban BMPs amounted to \$875,000. In 1999, the state conferred on LBWID a Virginia Watershed Award for the development of Best Management Practices under EPA grants.

In 1988, the board of directors of both LABARCA and BARLAMA voted to merge the two organizations into the Lake Barcroft Association (LBA). Ron Oxley, Larry Nixon and Loren Hershey prepared a feasibility study, and the presidents of the two organizations, Sam Rothman and Pat DiVito, endorsed the concept. The goal was to create a single entity that would eliminate conflicts, enhance residents' participation in community affairs, provide one board of directors and create a single balance sheet with sufficient funds to continue lake activities.

Unfortunately, a personal-injury lawsuit against the two organizations put the merger on hold. In 1987, a young man injured himself during the swimming leg of a LABARCA-sponsored triathlon. Even though he had signed a liability release form, there was some confusion about actual liability and blame. BARLAMA's insurance company eventually settled the suit in 1989, and LABARCA's did the same in 1991. With the final obstacle removed, substantial majorities of both memberships approved the merger on February 4, 1992. The assets of LABARCA were transferred to BARLAMA, and the name was changed to LBA. Members elected T.J. Glauthier as president and Trippi Penland as vice president of the newly merged association. Thereafter, a single community organization represented the members on issues concerning the lake and routine community affairs: safety, security, social events, publications and neighborhood improvements. Throughout the long history of the community association. Marykathlyn Kubat, followed by her daughter, Chris Lawson, have been the lake managers overseeing the general administration of the association.

The Lake Barcroft Recreation Center, another popular and highly visible organization, was also forced to make some changes. After almost eighteen years of operation, the Lake Barcroft Recreation Corporation faced a dilemma. Although the Recreation Center had spawned successful swimming and tennis teams, the facility itself had deteriorated. In particular, the tennis courts were in need of repair, and the swimming pool pumps required replacement—all of which entailed costs well above the anticipated income from membership dues. One proposal offered to build new clay courts for the Recreation Center in return for erecting a commercially managed bubble for indoor play during the winter months. A survey conducted in 1995 indicated strong opposition to the year-round tennis facility, however, and the concept was dropped from consideration. With no other suggestions and no resources for the additional funds needed, the Recreation Center was forced to close its doors. The ultimate fate of Parcel A will probably be the construction of some single family dwellings, which will be a part of Lake Barcroft.

## **Nature and the Environment**

So much had been accomplished up to 1975 that some complacency may have set in thereafter—a bust after the community's earlier boom. In 1979, an article in the Lake Barcroft Newsletter pointed out that the community's overall appearance had deteriorated, and the author called for Lake Barcroft to "pull up its socks." In 1982, another resident, noting the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Agnes questioned whether community spirit was waning. As evidence, he cited the meager turnout at LABARCA's quarterly meeting: 38 attendees, representing less than 2 percent of all households. He also noted the general deterioration of property care and maintenance.

Much of the lasting beauty of Lake Barcroft can be traced to individual efforts by its early settlers, but eventually the overwhelming volunteerism of the past diminished. Community leaders recognized the need to find another way to maintain the common grounds as well as private lots. In 1985, the LABARCA Improvements Committee requested donations needed to cover a budget gap. Six individuals who were interested in starting an Improvements Program donated \$1,528. More than 275 families followed their lead and sent in checks, mostly in the amount of \$25, resulting in \$7,000 in contributions to be used for landscaping and beach improvements. Residents living on Lakeview and Waterway Drives contributed \$1,425 to pay for mowing median strips. By their positive response to the Improvements Program, Barcrofters essentially issued a mandate to LABARCA: they wanted results, not excuses.

The ensuing changes were dramatic. Gardeners rehabilitated the shoddy and overgrown entrance at Aqua Terrace, and the committee instituted a continuing maintenance program.



**Responding to a WID engineering design by Ken Young of GKY & Associates, VDOT constructed a curb and gutter system to replace roadside ditches at the intersection of Nevius Street and Beachway Drive to improve safety of a school pedestrian crossing.**

Landscaping companies mowed the medians and replaced weeds with attractive turf. A long-range plan outlined much-needed improvements to the sixteen circles in Lake Barcroft. A special LABARCA subcommittee resurrected the dormant Garden Contest. More than 25 percent of the residents participated in a landscaper guidance program and an even greater number undertook pruning, cleanup and revitalization activities—all of which significantly enhanced the appearance of the community. In response to a petition from Barcrofters, the Virginia Highway Department installed a stoplight at Aqua Terrace. The Improvements Program continues to this day, under the capable leadership of Ernie Rauth.

Fred Chanania, an LBWID trustee and frequent contributor of nature articles to the newsletter in the eighties, studied the flora and fauna of Lake Barcroft. He and his colleagues annually conducted bird surveys for the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count. Fred also led nature hikes to the varied habitats that are found around the lake, including upland forest, open meadow, cattail swamp, riverine and lacustrine. The hikers identified birds, species of trees and bushes as well as animal tracks. Fred was also instrumental in setting up nest boxes to foster the nesting of bluebirds and wood ducks.

In 1980, John Aldrich wrote extensively about the birds found in the locale, basing his newsletter contribution on his 1942 survey of the area surrounding Lake Barcroft and his catalogue of the nesting bird population. In the article, he compared his 1942 survey with a 1979 survey conducted in the same study area—some ninety-two acres—that had formerly consisted of unbroken, dense forest. The difference between the two surveys was not so much in the numbers of birds, but rather in the species that were lost or gained. Completely gone were red-eyed vireos, ovenbirds and scarlet tanagers. The second survey found only two pairs representing the once very common wood thrush; cardinals, song sparrows, mockingbirds and blue jays had replaced them. Numerous catbirds, robins and house sparrows, visible in 1979, were totally absent in 1942. Unchanged species included the red-bellied woodpecker, crested flycatcher, Carolina wren, white-breasted nuthatch and hairy woodpecker. Aldrich reached the conclusion that the bird population had adapted to suburban habitats and was more abundant in 1979 than it had been in 1942.

Readers may be interested to know that, at one time, Lake Barcroft had its own "Beetle Queen." Mary (M. E.) Young took on the task of eradicating Japanese beetles from the community. Her request for donations from the homeowners resulted in an 83 percent response. She used the money to buy bacteria infected with milky spore disease, which she spread throughout Lake Barcroft. The disease remains in the soil and kills off the Japanese beetles residing there. The concerted efforts of LBWID and concerned homeowners continue to keep another blight—the gypsy moth—under control. In the past, numerous newsletter articles warned residents about this tree-killing menace and explained how to treat infestation. When the insects start to proliferate, LBWID warns homeowners and implements new techniques to eradicate the pests

As for other wildlife, in 1977, a bear made its way to Stonybrae Drive, forcing game wardens to tranquilize the animal in an effort (fortunately, a successful one) to capture it. A family of foxes lived near the Recreation Center, and one of them appeared on Lakeview Drive as recently as 1999. In the last few years, deer have been visiting the Community Garden, and raccoons are still getting into residents' garbage at night. The suspected presence of rabid raccoons in the area had raised considerable concern in the early 1980s, and even though the



threat has been reduced, it continues today. A much more persistent problem has involved beavers, which, at one point, were trapped and moved to other locations in the state after they had destroyed several trees. Muskrats also enjoy the lake's shores, where they can burrow their dens behind seawalls and under banks.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Agnes in 1972, the community instituted a fish-stocking program to replenish the fish lost as a result of the storm. The project called for a precise balance of large-mouth bass, bluegill and other sunfish, catfish and minnows in order to sustain growth and provide sport fishing in the lake. By the mid-1980s, fish counts indicated an imbalance in the bluegill and bass populations. Under harvesting had allowed bluegills to proliferate, thereby adversely affecting the bass in the competition for space in the lake. The release of 5,000 walleye fingerlings—which feed more frequently and consume more fish than bass—managed to solve the problem of bluegill overpopulation. About the same time, sterile grass carp were introduced in an attempt to reduce the annoying shoreline vegetation known as elodea, a common lake plant. Grass carp eat up to three times their weight every day and can gain five to ten pounds each year. As a result, they cleared the shoreline, and today there is very little evidence of elodea around the lake.

In the mid-1990s, the WID staff noted an overabundance of common carp, an exotic plant-eating fish that can out-compete all other fish species in the lake. Under a state permit, tons of common carp were harvested, relieving the stress on the large-mouth bass that occupy the same shallow water environment. While ridding the lake of carp, the staff noted the presence of a new fish species, whose origins were unknown—the gizzard shad. Ken Kopka, WID's staff director, recommended creating a new sport fishery, using striped bass (known in some areas as rockfish), which would also reduce the profusion of the newly discovered gizzard shad. Thus, to provide the needed balance among the fish population as well as enhanced recreational fishing, the WID stocked the lake with five thousand striped bass—fine fighting fish that grow rapidly to their mature weight of ten-fifteen pounds.

Another eyesore appeared in the early 1990s: algae blooms, which looked like green paint spills, covered substantial portions of the lake. WID sought advice from a distinguished biologist, Dr. Dennis Cooke of Kent State University, who had been the first president of the North American Lake Management Society. Dr. Cooke visited the lake and studied

monitoring data that had been collected earlier. He determined that the aeration system, installed in the early 1980s, was underpowered and might even be doing more harm than good. He recommended a system that stirs up the aerated water and injects oxygen into the mud at the bottom of the lake, thereby preventing phosphorous from recycling into the water column, which is how algae blooms are generated. Dr. Cooke's valuable advice resulted in the complete replacement of the aeration system, including the lake's underwater hose network and a quadrupling of the amount of electrical horsepower input. The work eliminated the unattractive algae blooms.

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For the past twenty years the administration of the lake has been running practically on automatic. The community associations and clubs have continued to make Lake Barcroft a fun and comfortable place to live. Beautification of the common properties has progressed. Newsletters and directories come out periodically and are probably taken for granted. A new service, the Lake Link, founded by George McLennan and George November ties the community together electronically. The WID has paid off bonds and is maintaining the lake and the environment. Dredging, a major problem of the past, is conducted on schedule. While other lakes in the area are slowly dying from lack of care, Lake Barcroft continues to be a model for lake Best Management Practices. The residents have every reason to be proud of the support each homeowner gives to make Lake Barcroft such a desirable place to live.



**Damsels throw Large Mouth Bass into the lake.**



*December 1977*

# The Lake Barcroft Woman's Club

**T**he Lake Barcroft Woman's Club has an admirable 45-year history of volunteer and financial support of charitable and community causes. These efforts are sometimes taken for granted, which may in part explain why, in these times, it has been increasingly difficult to enlist new members. The goal of this chapter is to recognize the unique work performed by the club and to inspire new members to carry on its often thankless but invaluable projects.

## The Beginning

In 1955, the Lake Barcroft community, already five years old, had yet to grow out of its rustic beginnings. The houses, approximately 165 of them, were few and far between, especially in the North and Middle Areas. No enterprising cartographers had mapped the muddy trails called roads. Without the Potterton Causeway over Tripps Run, traveling around the lake from one area to another was more like going on safari rather than visiting a suburban residential development. Many new residents were young couples just starting families. Few wives worked outside the home, most preferring to stay at home with the children. The setting was ripe for an organization to unite the young pioneering women.

In early 1955, Elsie Kolm and Helen O'Rourke (now Helen O'Rourke-McClary) were discussing life in Lake Barcroft when Elsie mentioned how much she missed her Women's\* Club in Mantua, a nearby suburb. The conversation led to the idea of creating a similar club in Lake Barcroft. Because Elsie had considerable experience in club activities, especially federated Women's clubs, she invited interested women to her home to explore the possibilities of forming the Lake Barcroft Woman's Club (LBWC). A representative of the Northern Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs was present at this introductory gathering to explain the advantages of that organization. A month later, at the first meeting of the new club, the twenty-eight charter members elected Elsie president in a candlelit ceremony. In April 1956, the Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs accepted the club's application for membership in the Northern Virginia District.

At first, the club membership was limited to fifty, the maximum number that could meet comfortably in someone's house. Being young couples with new homes, furniture was

sometimes scarce, but the women made do with anything available. As the club grew, meetings were held in the hall above the Annandale Fire Department and later in the Epworth Methodist Church. Once the club had more space, membership limits no longer applied. By September 1958, members numbered more than a hundred, making LBWC one of Northern Virginia's largest women's clubs. In that first year, the members chose blue and white as the club colors and the sailboat as the club's motif. Jean Stephens wrote that the members shared many laughs about the "big decisions" they had to make, such as whether to vote by raising their hands or by a voice vote of "aye" or "nay."

The mission of the Woman's Club is detailed in its bylaws: "The purpose of this organization shall be to bring into closer unity the women of Lake Barcroft in order to promote through their common interest the cultural, educational and environmental welfare of the community." From the beginning, the club directed its efforts toward neighborhood projects and philanthropies. The members combined social activities with fund-raising projects to raise money for worthy causes. They spent precious hours volunteering their services to assist various charitable organizations. At the same time, the women came together to further their common interests, such as literature, art, bridge and travel.

## Typical Projects

The members worked hard their first year, setting the club's course for the future. The first LBWC project assisted the Northern Virginia Pre-School for the Blind by donating three tables, two bulletin boards and Christmas cookies. Subsequently, members collected \$270 for one child's tuition for a year. The club also presented the Lake Barcroft community with an American flag to fly over the Aqua Terrace entrance. Volunteers helped operate a bloodmobile and an X-ray mobile. In addition, members spent considerable time driving children to and from the Child Development Center on Cherry Street—sometimes referred to as the Cerebral Palsy School—which was chartered in Richmond by club member Therese St. Hilaire and her colleagues on the United Cerebral Palsy board.

The club's first major undertaking involved the new Fairfax Hospital, which was then under construction on Gallows Road. In 1957, members voted to pledge \$500 a year for four years to provide a memorial room in the new hospital due to

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\*Most Women's Clubs use the plural of the noun. The Lake Barcroft club uses the singular.

open in 1960. In 1961, the hospital honored the Woman's Club by mounting a plaque outside the room that its members were helping to support. It took five years of bridge luncheons, fashion shows, white elephant sales, bake sales and dances to raise the \$2,000—the largest amount raised by any women's club in the area at that time. The club followed up a year later by sewing new drapes for their room.

The Woman's Club also made valuable contributions to the community. The club's Safety Committee recommended posting "No Parking" signs at school bus stops usually blocked by contractors' vehicles. To raise money and as a safety measure, the club sold first aid kits for automobiles. To emphasize safe cycling, the club organized annual Bicycle Rodeos for children, which included bike inspections by county police officers. In 1960, the club presented life rings and ropes to every fourth house on the lake. The rings were prominently displayed close to the water for use in case of an emergency.

By 1965, the club had grown into a wide-ranging service organization, providing support to several diverse institutions, including the Medical College of Virginia, Manassas Home for the Aged, CARE, local libraries, the Fairfax Association of Retarded Children and the Fairfax Symphony. In addition, the club paid dues to the Federation of Women's Clubs, which, in turn, supported national charities. The club instituted an annual \$200 college scholarship award for deserving J.E.B. Stuart High School students who showed an interest in pursuing teaching as a career. The members created the "Sick Room Loan Closet" as a way to make equipment available to residents recovering from illnesses. Within a few years, the "closet" contained several pairs of crutches, two walkers, a commode, plastic bed pads and a \$75 wheelchair purchased with the proceeds from a sale of potted plants run by Churchell Ruegg and Frankie Hill. Now known as Home Health Aids, the loan closet still exists and includes a wide variety of items that are available from club member Millie Schreiber.

In 1970, Esther Moeschl, chairperson of the club's Safety and Education Committee, sponsored an essay contest at J.E.B. Stuart High School. Over 350 students submitted entries on the subject, "Good Citizenship in a Modern World," a topic chosen to reflect the goal of the contest: "to inspire the students in their duties as citizens." The chair of the English Department at a community college judged the essays. A high school senior

was awarded a \$25 savings bond as a grand prize, and the winners in grades 9-12 each won \$10 cash prizes. In 1980, Naomi Zeavin came up with the idea for J.E.B. Stuart seniors to compete in an LBWC-sponsored essay contest dealing with the free enterprise system. The club not only won a merit award for the most outstanding project related to that theme from the Northern Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs but also raised \$600 from various contributors for prizes for the winners.

Over the years, members of the Woman's Club have developed an effective and fair routine for collecting and distributing charitable donations. Three needy organizations are chosen annually by popular vote of the membership. An example of a current recipient is the Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA), a coalition of twenty-six Christian congregations who volunteer to provide assistance to the needy, such as emergency prescription and rental funds, a child development center, food for empty cupboards, furniture and clothing. The Bailey's Crossroads Volunteer Fire Department, a close and good neighbor, is another organization that has received help from the Woman's Club. In all, some sixty charitable organizations—from Special Olympics to Hospice of Northern Virginia—have been the beneficiaries of LBWC members' efforts.

## Activities

The LBWC sponsors a variety of activities for its members. Monthly club meetings during the autumn, winter and spring feature guest speakers, with topics ranging from local politics to flower arranging to current events. At one meeting in the



**Volunteer Fire Department Committee including Joe Theisman.**

late 1950s, Nancy Emory and three other members of the Fairfax Symphony played string quartet selections. Nancy played on a cello that she had made herself! Her husband, Alan, a news correspondent, then reported on his trip to the Soviet Union and the Middle East with Vice President Richard Nixon.

Bridge became a long-term club staple with the inception of Friendship Bridge Parties; this was the genesis of the Bridge Marathons and evening bridge matches that continue today. Some years ago, Wendy Cline started a Walkers/Garden Group. With the advent of Lake Barcroft's Community Garden, the gardeners went over to that endeavor. The Walkers Group continues to meet once or twice a month and takes walks either around Lake Barcroft or in nearby parks.

An International Relations Group within LBWC featured visits to foreign embassies, the Pan Am Building, International House, the United Nations, the U.S. Department of State and the White House. Eventually, the club became affiliated with the American Field Service, and for several years, members hosted foreign exchange students under a program called Operation Bus Stop. International hospitality was truly tested during the blizzard of 1966, when four students from Colombia and their State Department guide were stranded at the home of Kyle and Althea Davis from Saturday evening through the following Monday afternoon. Asked how she managed with five extra mouths to feed, Althea replied, "We finally ran out of eggs, but they were delightful guests."

The Woman's Club held an annual Talent Night for members desiring to enter their arts and crafts in a competition divided into several categories. For example, the art division awarded prizes to novices, semi-pros and professional artists; knitting, crafts and sewing divisions also contained subcategories. Winners of the LBWC contest went on to display their talents at the annual Northern Virginia Federation of Women's Club's craft show, winners there went on to the state competition. In 1980, at the Virginia State Federation of Women's Clubs convention, Sally Alne's drawing won first place, Judy Romney's watercolor entry took second in that category and Agnes O'Neil placed first for her knitted afghan.

The Woman's Club has maintained a Book Club since the seventies. At the beginning of each year, members recommend titles to longtime chairperson Marjorie Macone. Selection of the books for that year hinges on a quick check to see if there are enough copies available in the library system. Members read a particular book each month and then meet to discuss it. Titles have ranged from Gore Vidal's memoirs, *Palimpsest*, to



Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz's *Palace Walk*. Men are invited to the last meeting of the year, which recently has featured a potluck dinner at Bill and Alice Lowenthal's home. The books discussed at these sessions are almost always works of nonfiction, and the men do most of the talking—whether they have read the book or not.

In 1964, the Woman's Club joined Vonnie Bates in running Lake Barcroft's Independence Day Parade, a tradition that continues to this day. Vonnie had founded the event a few years earlier, when she marched fifteen pot-banging children through Lake Barcroft's streets. Asked what made her think of having a parade, she replied, "It just seemed like the right thing to do." Eventually, the parade transformed into a community-wide event, complete with decorated bicycles, cars, ballet dancers and a marching band. The responsibility for this event recently passed to the Newcomers' Club. Even after so many years, it is still a pleasure to hear the J.E.B. Stuart High School band playing John Philip Sousa marches along the lake as the parade proceeds from Beach 5 to Beach 3.

The club sponsored the community's first Easter Egg Hunt in the mid-sixties. The annual spring event quickly became popular with children ranging from toddlers to ten-year-olds. In just a few short years after the tradition started, the club members were hiding a thousand brightly colored plastic eggs filled with jellybeans; a penny reward was given for each egg that was found and returned. The Halloween Parade had its origins at about the same time, and it has also become an annual ritual. The event, long chaired by Jean Meyer, usually includes the J.E.B. Stuart High School band in addition to a fire engine or police car.

The Lake Barcroft Woman's Club decided to drop out of the National Federation of Women's Clubs in 1993. The LBWC had become more of a neighborhood club than a regional service organization, and members felt that they got little in return for the time and effort they spent supporting the national federation. Another persuasive argument for ending their affiliation involved the annual dues of \$700 that they paid to the federation: not only did the expenditure put a strain on limited resources, but it was also money that could be better spent on local charities.

The efforts of the Woman's Club in a variety of areas did not go unnoticed. In the early 1960s, the American Cancer Society presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the club in recognition of its many contributions. Sears-Roebuck and the General Federation of Women's Clubs issued a joint citation for "Community Improvement, 1962-64." The club received the Vogue Pattern Service Award for teaching high school girls the art of sewing, and the club's contributions to Project CARE resulted in the "Golden Rule Award." These are just a few of the many awards honoring the club's contributions. In time, the responsibility for all charitable fund-raising events, such as Easter Seals, was transferred from the community association to the Woman's Club.

## **Fund-Raising Events**

The diversity of events sponsored by the Lake Barcroft Woman's Club is a true testament to club members' creativity and versatility. Over the years, the events included dances, stage shows, tours, sales of various popular items, and book projects, to name but a few. And the proceeds—which were substantial—were donated to charitable causes.

A Valentine's Day Dance held at a downtown Washington, D.C., hotel was one of the club's first fund-raisers, and, at a cost of \$16 per couple, it proved to be a huge success. In 1955, a bridge luncheon that cost \$1.55, for which the participants paid \$2.25, enhanced the Woman's Club's coffers considerably. The club sponsored theme dances to raise money, and one of the first, a West of the Pecos Dance, had cowboys and Indians dancing together, as good neighbors do. Participants dressed in Polynesian costumes for a South Sea Island Dance. In 1961, the fifth annual Benefit Ball, called the Suppressed Desire

Dance, was held at St. Anthony's Hall and drew two hundred partygoers in all manner of outfits. Prizewinners included Helen O'Rourke, dressed as a poodle, and Lewis Slack, who came as a baby dressed in nightclothes and carrying his baby bed mattress. Jean Stephens smudged her face and sewed money to her dress, representing her desire to be filthy rich.

On April 17, 1966, the Woman's Club held the first of many house and garden tours. Considerable advertising preceded the event, including a presentation on WRC-TV by LBWC's president, Delores Friedburger, who showed photographs of the lake as well as the homes that would be open for the tour. Other Woman's Club members in the television audience showed off their Easter bonnets. The *Washington Post* and the *Washington Star* ran articles about the upcoming tour, complete with pictures of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell Phelps—who owned and operated the Congressional School on Sleepy Hollow Road—at 6319 Cavalier Corridor. As an added attraction, Jeane Dixon, a noted author and psychic, served as a guest hostess at one of the homes on the tour, where she autographed copies of her best-selling book, *A Gift of Prophecy*.

A second house tour held the following year featured a tea at the home of Therese St. Hilaire to honor twenty wives of public officials living in Lake Barcroft. Many of these women were active in Lake Barcroft community affairs. Their husbands included Ramsey Clark, then attorney general of the United States; Warren Christopher, deputy attorney general and later secretary of state in the first Clinton administration; Robert Komer, ambassador-at-large; John Foster, director of research and development at the Department of Defense; and twelve congressmen: Charles Bennett of Florida, Robert Dole of Kansas (later Senate majority leader), Wayne Hayes of Ohio, Melvin Price of Illinois (the powerful chairman of the House Armed Services Committee), and Charles Vanik of Ohio.

Several stage shows that were written, directed and performed by residents raised money for LBWC charities. The first production, *Global Glamour*, was staged in 1962. It was followed the next year by *This Is My Country*, which featured songs from various eras, starting with pre-Civil War days in the Old South, and progressing to the Gay Nineties, vaudeville, the Roaring Twenties, World War II, jazz and finally folk music, hootenanny-style. The 1964 production, *Tickets Please*, used New York and Broadway as themes for a lively musical sparked by Herb Davis, a popular radio and television personality at that time.

Over the years, other fund-raising projects were undertaken to add money to the club's treasury. Members contributed favorite recipes to a popular Lake Barcroft cookbook, *Barcroft Fare with a Flair*. At the height of the jogging craze, the club sold long-sleeved royal blue sweatshirts emblazoned with "Lake Barcroft Jogger" in white on the back. A Vietnamese orphan named Le Thi Hiu was the focus of another fund-raising

project: 50 percent of the proceeds from the sale of Lake Barcroft Christmas cards were donated to help support the 12-year-old girl.

While the Woman's Club receives credit for all the good works in which members were involved, it should be noted that their husbands deserve some recognition as well. Aside from babysitting duties when their wives were occupied with charitable causes, the men generally supported the fund-raising events and parties by providing the manual labor that always seemed to be needed. The men also performed in various shows. On one hilarious occasion, for example, after three weeks of intensive rehearsals, Bill Batrus, George Bates, Barney O'Rourke and others performed a vigorous cancan as part of *Global Glamour*, an LBWC-sponsored show presented at the Congressional School. It was a real tour de force, and the sight of eight gentlemen high-kicking their hairy legs brought the house down, and deservedly so.

On the occasion of the club's fortieth anniversary in 1995, an article in the *Lake Barcroft Newsletter* noted that the club had donated \$100,000 to charitable causes during its forty-year existence. That figure seems low. Available records show that the Woman's Club made contributions totaling \$75,000 during the eleven years between 1990 and 2000. That sum includes only the annual contributions to three major charities; it excludes many other donations that were made over the years. Given the difficulty of raising funds through the good will of donors and by the hard work of club members, the women generated a substantial amount of money for their causes.

## The Footbridge

In 1976, the members met at the George Mason Library to decide how to spend \$10,500 in surplus funds. There were two proposals: constructing a footbridge over Holmes Run or making a donation to BARLAMA to reduce the outstanding debt on the lake purchase. The outcome of the vote was anything but a *fait accompli*. There was some opposition to the bridge among Woman's Club members. Chica Brunsvold, the club's president at the time, knew that the debt would be paid off eventually and,

with the backing of popular member Mike Miller, she pushed hard for approval of the bridge. After some discussion, a vote was taken and the footbridge won. The arguments for the bridge centered on joining the South and Middle Areas of the community, thereby shortening the distance for children walking to nearby schools and for residents visiting one another. Before the bridge was installed, some children would wade across the stream or hop across a small waterfall, both dangerous shortcuts.

The initial concept for a link between the two areas involved some kind of floating pontoon bridge, which would also incorporate a debris trap. Another possibility was a cable-drawn, do-it-yourself pedestrian ferry. In any case, the idea raised concerns among neighbors near the proposed site. The opposition cited three drawbacks: (1) intrusion by outsiders, especially on motorcycles, (2) the community's liability and (3) long-term costs. A question about the future use of the property on Dearborn Drive, adjacent to the bridge site, was also raised.

LBWC president, Chica Brunsvold, and Margaret Finley, chairperson of the Community Improvement Committee, made presentations to the LABARCA board in which they stressed the benefits of having a bridge and promised that intrusion would be controlled. Still, the board was unwilling to support the idea; the association's members had already voted down several proposed community projects, and the board did not want to add to its rejection rate. To resolve the matter, the Woman's Club conducted a door-to-door referendum, resulting in 836 households in favor and 168 either opposed, noncommittal or unavailable. In the end, the residents most



Margaret Finley, Board of Supervisors Chairman Jack Herrity, Mason District Supervisor Alan Magazine, Chica Brunsvold, Mike Miller, Naomi Zeavin.

affected by the proposed footbridge dropped their opposition in the interest of community goodwill. To quote Joan Doupe, “I think the smartest thing we did was avoid a full-scale debate at LABARCA and BARLAMA membership meetings. Going door-to-door and explaining it one-on-one was a lot of work, but that’s what made the difference.”

Because the bridge site was a county right-of-way, the Woman’s Club had to get permission from Fairfax County to build the bridge. As part of the justification for the waiver, the club offered the bridge as a gift to the county upon completion. The club also promised to landscape the areas around the footbridge thereby screening it from view. Margaret Finley was the head of the project, and Stuart Finley served as an adviser to the Woman’s Club. Stuart’s knowledge of the county system helped to get the project approved, and he provided guidance in contracting the job with Coastal Design and Construction, Inc.

On June 1, 1977, Naomi Zeavin and Jeanne Fellows, president and past president, respectively, of LBWC signed the \$10,000 contract for construction of the bridge. The completed bridge was dedicated at a ceremony on December 17, 1977. Past presidents Chica Brunsvold, escorted by Jack Herrity, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and Mike Miller, escorted by Mason District Supervisor Alan Magazine, cut ribbons at each end of the span. They met in the middle and shook hands, to signal that the footbridge was officially open.

Chica Brunsvold considers the footbridge to be the Woman’s Club’s most successful and longest lasting accomplishment. Certainly, the footbridge is the most visible Woman’s Club contribution to the community, and the members view it as “a literal metaphor for the club’s years of building bridges to bring its residents closer together in many ways.”

## **The Community Garden**

To commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Woman’s Club, members requested and received permission to create the Woman’s Club Community Garden on WID-owned land near the footbridge. The brainchild of Dorothy Werner, then LBWC president, the concept was supported enthusiastically by a long list of Woman’s Club officials, volunteers and community leaders, who then worked cooperatively to make the dream a reality. To get the garden off to a successful start, the club drew up a budget and allocated funds for a portion of the landscaping and plants for the first three years. WID provided the land and valuable logistical support; and the Beautification and Improvements Committee of the Lake Barcroft Association assumed responsibility for the actual design, installation, planting and maintenance of the garden. Additional funds for the garden now generally come from donations honoring the memories of loved ones.

The garden is a peaceful and beautiful place to enjoy nature. The site features a delightful garden, a wetlands trail, benches and a dock—all arranged around a tiered series of small ponds that are connected by three spillways and fed by a sparkling five-foot-tall waterfall. Many of the rocks used in the ponds were retrieved from the bottom of the lake during frequent dredging operations. The garden, which took five years to complete, is primarily the work of Ernie Rauth, one of the original residents, longtime member of the association’s Architectural Review Committee and chairperson of the Improvements Committee. The dedication ceremony, held on May 1, 2000, commemorated Ernie’s many valuable contributions to the garden with a plaque inscribed “Ernie Rauth Waterfall.” At Lake Barcroft’s Fiftieth Anniversary Party in November 2000, Ernie received an additional award for his forty-nine years of service to the community. In his honor, the path between Lakeview Drive and Dearborn Drive—which goes over the footbridge and through the garden—has been named Rauth Lane.

## **The Legacy**

The Woman’s Club is nonpartisan, nonpolitical and nonprofit. One would be hard-pressed to find a similar organization that has done so much for its community. In 1964, Helen O’Rourke, as director of Woman’s activities for Project Hope, traveled extensively to communicate with 150,000 junior clubwomen across the United States who supported Project Hope as their cause. On one trip, a Jacksonville, Florida newspaper quoted her as saying: “There are so many easy jokes about the clubwoman-type, but nobody really knows how much that enormous volunteer corps of workers does for the country, both for charity and civic-work. Why, sometimes I hate to think what would happen to most every cultural and charitable project all over the nation if these women suddenly decided to give it all up.”

These sentiments are just as appropriate in 2000 as they were in 1964, and perhaps even more so, given the federal government’s greater dependence on charities to support the needy in America. In these changing times, it may become increasingly difficult to maintain a strong membership that is dedicated to the mission of the Lake Barcroft Woman’s Club. Five years ago, Norma Cockrell expressed some perspective on to the ideals of the club: “Never to rest on its laurels, the Club will continue to look for new ways it can improve life in our community and surroundings and help those worthy causes that are discovered along the way. Many happy memories, lasting friendships and fun-filled hours have accompanied this pursuit in the past. It is resolved not to look upon it as past history but as a promise of the productive and good times ahead.”



# Conclusion

**A**s stated at the outset, this booklet is a compendium of twelve articles written to serve as a partial chronicle of the first fifty years of Lake Barcroft history. It outlines the turbulent first twenty-five years of the community's existence; a time of challenges ranging from the effects of a devastating hurricane to debates over where the community should be going. Through the first twenty-five years of Lake Barcroft most of the changes came about by virtue of the hard work and thoughtful decisions of many first generation volunteers. Their traditions, built over time, have survived in such annual events as the Fourth of July Fireworks, Easter Egg Hunt and Halloween Parade.

This history also covers the major aspects of Lake Barcroft over the second twenty-five years, but there are simply too many individuals for me to name everyone who contributed to the community in so many ways. Clubs, celebrations, parades, charities, parties, sports activities and neighborhood watches continue, thanks to the vigorous efforts of involved residents. New ideas from the second generation have evolved into sustained projects, including, but not limited to, the Lake Barcroft Foundation, Geesepeace, Friends of the Lake, the Community Garden and the Lake Barcroft computer-based website and listserve, Lake Link

What of the next 25 years, the next 50 years? Will there be challenges? Of Course! The nature of those challenges is difficult to predict; they will surely arise and test the commitment of this unique community. The Lake Barcroft Association, the Woman's Club and the Watershed Improvement District serve as the foundation for meeting our commitments to service the overall needs of the Northern Virginia area as well as maintaining Lake Barcroft in the mold cast by our predecessors.

The various clubs may have decreased in number since the first generation, but times change, as do people's attitudes. Like other successful communities, the second generation carried on the traditions of the early settlers' inspiring legacy. All in all, the essence of the past continues today and will into the future as new residents contribute their talents. The future of Lake Barcroft will depend on the next generation-the third-generation of Barcrofters-to reach back to previous generations, grab the baton, move forward and perpetuate Colonel Barger's description of Lake Barcroft as "like being in heaven...a glorious spot."

*L. Anthony Bracken*





*January 10, 1964*









**Penny Pile** (*May, 1964*)





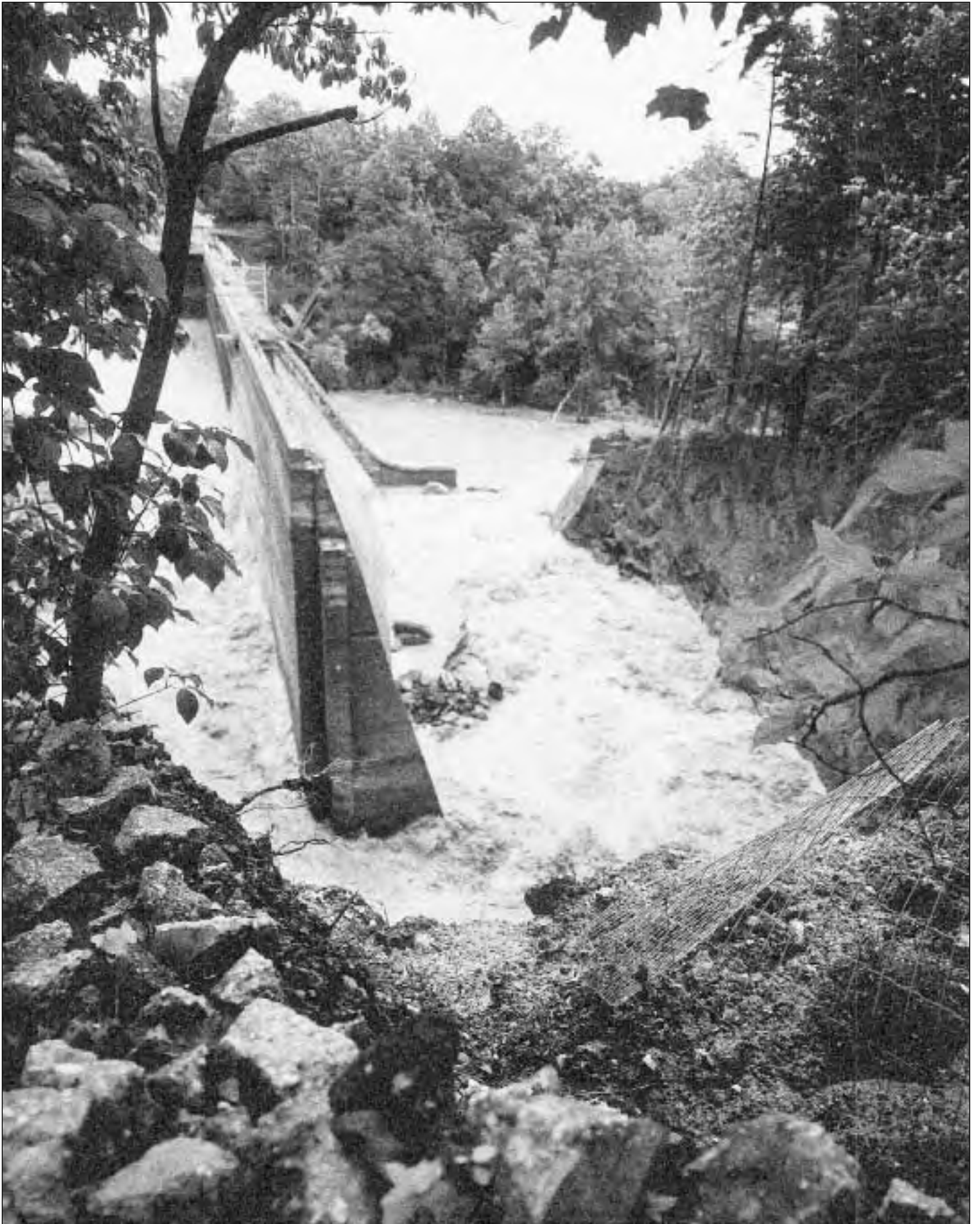




*August, 1964*







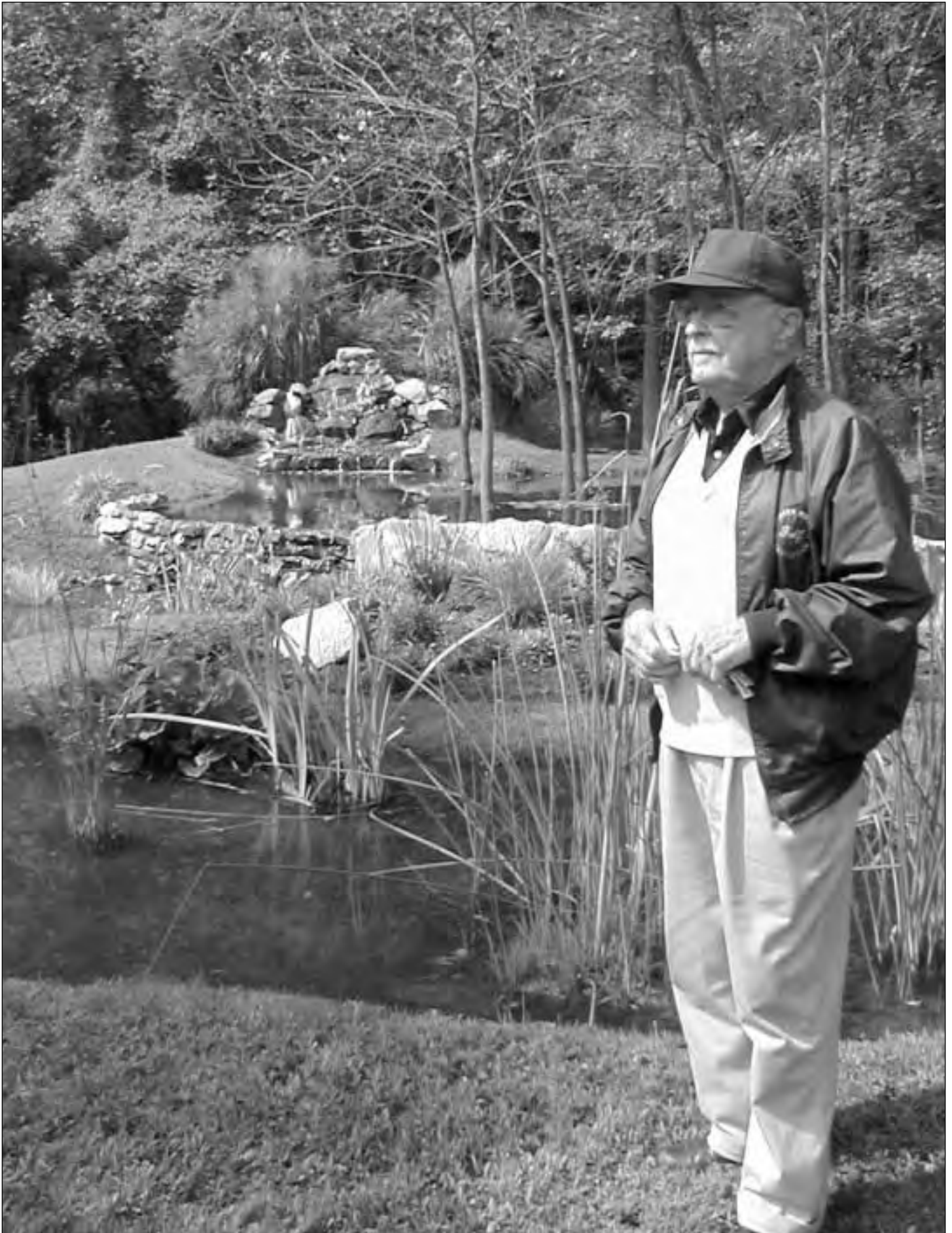




*November, 1963*



*August 1, 1964*



Ernie Rauth at the Community Garden.







*January, 1966*







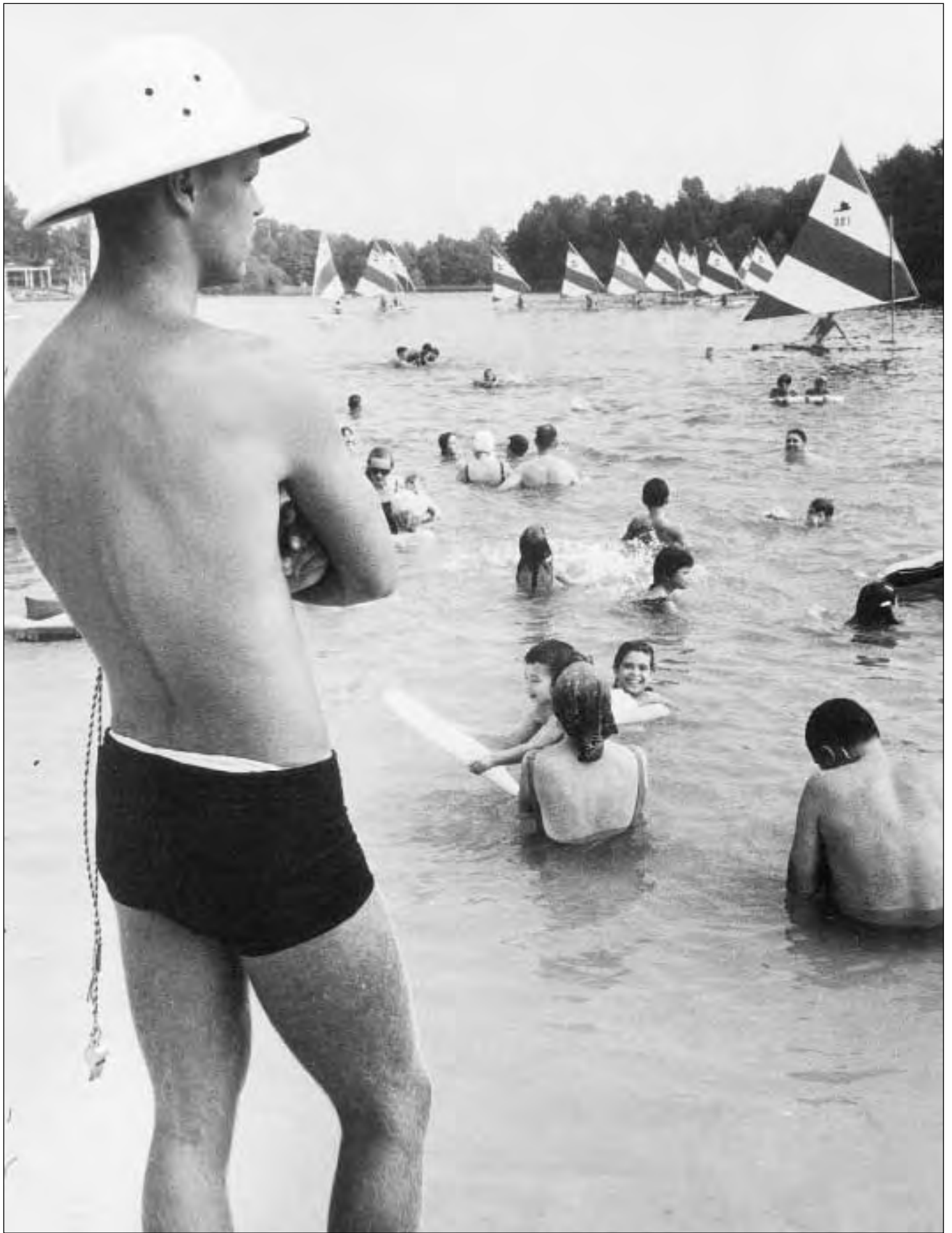












*August 15, 1965*





*May, 1964*



*September, 1963*

# Photo Identification



Antiquarian readers are invited to mail the names and other data of unidentified Barcrofters illustrated in this book to:

**Lake Barcroft History, c/o WID, 3650 Boat Dock Drive, Falls Church, Virginia 22041.**

Eventually, when enough responses are received, an article in the *Lake Barcroft Newsletter* will identify and update the contemporary whereabouts of earlier Barcrofters.

## **Examples**

The tyro scuba diver being instructed by Sherman Vandevender, shown in the picture above, is **Robert Finley** who recently celebrated his 50th birthday and lives with his family near JEB Stuart High School. His brother **Frank**, who is shown operating the dragline on the opposite page during the 1961 lake dredging, is currently a licensed aviation mechanic and lives in the Reston area.

The tall gentleman talking to a little girl on page 75 on the earlier steps to Beach 2 is **Frank Major**, who was President of LABARCA from 1964 and 1965. Frank's grandson **Kevin Hardy** is Lake Barcroft's Water Safety Supervisor. **Bob Hardy** also served in that position.

The second man from the left in the picture on page 44 is the distinguished conservationist **Lloyd Swift**, who died in 2001 at age 96. Lloyd was a wildlife specialist with USDA for decades. Lloyd was famous for his smoked carp. He was mildly disappointed when no one picked up on his suggestion of introducing River Otter to Lake Barcroft. The island at Holmes Run was named in his honor.

On page 28, **Carrington Williams** was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates during the crucial period when WID was being established. He prevailed on the Virginia General Assembly to revise the WID law so that it would work

in Lake Barcroft's case. Carrington now lives on Half Moon Circle in the Middle Area and spends more time and energy preserving Civil War battlegrounds than practicing law.

On page 29, **Myron Birnbaum** was more than a lyricist. He was Editor of the *Lake Barcroft Newsletter* for 13 years putting out 152 issues ending in November 1983. He was President of the Lake Barcroft Association in 1968 and 1969. A graduate of Stanford Law School, Myron served with the Judge Advocate General's Office of the U. S. Air Force. He died on February 17th, 1984.

On page 70, **Ernie Rauth**, Chairman of LBA's Improvements Committee, created the Community Garden at the Woman's Club Bridge and improved the beaches and traffic circles with creative landscaping. Ernie is one of Barcroft's original residents and was Col. Barger's Community Architect.



# Community Leaders



## Lake Barcroft Woman's Club Presidents

1955-56	Elsie Kolm	1970-71	Therese St. Hilaire	1985-86	Nancy Stauch
1956-57	Sylvia Cazan	1971-72	Virginia Arnold	1986-87	Louise Juergens
1957-58	Jean Stephens	1972-73	Peggy Johnson	1987-88	Tina Trapnell
1958-59	Mildred Fazar	1973-74	Helen Richmond	1988-89	Anne Walker
1959-60	Esther Patridge	1974-75	Mike Miller	1989-90	Kas Johnston
1960-61	Helen O'Rourke	1975-76	Chica Brunsvold	1990-91	Edith Bairdain
1961-62	Beatrice Carland	1976-77	Jeanne Fellows	1991-92	Kay Ward-Johnson
1962-63	Mildred Fazar	1977-78	Naomi Zeavin	1992-93	Mary Hughes
1963-64	Esther Jerome	1978-79	Kay Gerber	1993-94	Weezie Chappell
1964-65	Churchill Ruegg	1979-80	Lois Kaye	1994-95	Elena Borges
1965-66	Dolorous Freiburger	1980-81	Jean Meyer	1995-96	Dorothy Werner
1966-67	Adelaide McGurr	1981-82	Sandy Augliere	1996-97	Julia Treagy
1967-68	Louise Heid	1982-83	Lolita Acuna	1997-99	Jean Meyer
1968-69	Dorothy Berger	1983-84	Rose Swift	1999-00	Weezie Chappell
1969-70	Josephine Cox	1984-85	Marcelle Cahill	2000-01	Nan Brent





*Photo Carl Lambert*

## LABARCA Presidents

Ellen Oshins	1953-54	James Cobb	1974-75
Don Birrell	1955-56	Jack Fasteau	1976-77
Anson Hyde	1957-58	John Meskimen	1978-79
Carl Johnson	1958-59	Caroline Jones	1980-81
Stuart Finley	1960-61	Strode Brent	1981-82
Rex Lauck	1962-63	George Erikson	1982-83
Frank Major	1964-65	Tina Trapnell	1984-85
Chris Murphy	1966-67	Ron Oxley	1986-87
Myron Birnbaum	1968-69	Sam Rothman	1988-90
Philip Johnson	1970-71	Trippi Penland	1991-92
George Overby	1972-73		



*August, 1964*

## Barlama-BBI Presidents

1970-71	Fritz Trakowski	1980-81	Sam Rothman
1971-72	William Arnold	1981-83	Ky Faulkner
1972-73	John Haughey	1984-85	Edward G. Miller
1973-74	Dave Alne	1985-87	Jerry Meyer
1974-75	Nancy Shands	1987-88	Larry Nixon
1975-76	Sandy Augliere	1988-89	Pat Divito
1976-77	Ron Greene	1990-91	Strode Brent
1978-79	Frank Sanger	1991-92	T. J. Glauthier



## LBA Past Presidents

1992-94 T. J. Glauthier  
1994-96 Jim Kilbourne  
1996-98 David Goslin  
1998-00 George Waters  
2000-02 David Feld

Christine Lawson - Lake Manager

## LBA Year 2000 Directors

David Feld - President  
George Waters - Vice President  
Ralph Smalley - Secretary  
Karol Forsberg - Treasurer  
Frank Aukofer - Membership  
Nan Brent - Architectural Review  
Peter Browne - Environmental Quality  
Mac Canter - Legal  
Bob Foster - Water Safety/Beach  
Garrett Green - Director  
George McLennan - Security  
Sue Nixon - Special Events  
Therese St. Hilaire - Publications



## WID Trustees

Dave Alne, *Chairman*  
 Tony Bracken, *Treasurer*  
 Sammie Guy, *Secretary*

1972-77 Sara Ann Determan  
 1972-74 Edwin Deagle  
 1972-74 Dick Anderson  
 1974-76 John Haughey  
 1974-78 Dave Stahl  
 1976-85 Jack Keith  
 1977-on Dave Alne  
 1978-86 Dick Werling  
 1986-94 Freeman Williams  
 1986-01 Fred Chanania  
 1994-96 Charles Cooper  
 2001-on Sammie Guy  
 2001-on Anthony Bracken

## WID Associates

*Current*  
 Walter Cate  
 Wendy Cline  
 Charles Cooper  
 Alan Hudson  
 Gary Jewell  
 Jack Keith  
 Ernie Rauth  
 Peter Silvia  
 Richard Werling

*Past*  
 Strode Brent  
 Ki Faulkner  
 T. J. Glauthier  
 Lloyd Swift

## WID Staff

*Current*  
 Stuart Finley  
 Sam Ellis  
 Ken Kopka  
 Davis Grant

*Past*  
 Robert Morris  
 Kelly Wilson  
 Paul Gordon



*Photo by Harry Naltchayan, Washington Post*

# Into the 21st Century

**A**s this *Lake Barcroft History* goes to press, momentary events presage a fruitful future for the Lake Barcroft Community. WID's Dave Alne and Stu Finley are seen here *burning the bond*, with LBA President Dave Feld presiding, as over a hundred Barcrofters celebrate on the Beach 5 Peninsula the end of 27 years of municipal bond debt service. Hereafter, 100% of WID taxes will be available to finance future improvements.

Other noteworthy events are underway:

- WID's six-year EPA 319 Grant, which has committed \$800,000 to identifying and demonstrating stormwater management *Best Management Practices*, is winding up as WID staff and engineering consultants prepare a Final Report to disseminate innovative conservation practices to other communities in America.
- WID has published a 72-page book *Watershed and Lake BMPs* which is now being augmented by additional technical data in the EPA 319 Grant Final Report.
- WID's new *Diversion Debris Trap* is about to be built as part of a million dollar *Virginia Department of Transportation* bridge construction project to replace the worn-out Potterton Causeway.
- A \$200,000 federal *Housing and Urban Department* grant initiated by Congressman Tom Davis will fund the diversion debris trap design and construction.
- A *Holmes Run Watershed Plan* is about to be developed as part of a Fairfax County *Department of Public Works and Environmental Services* project to form the basis for ambitious new stormwater management concepts such as *Comprehensive Urban Watershed Retrofit*.
- Federal, Virginia, Potomac, Chesapeake Bay agencies clean water programs are beginning to merge and materialize with the help of jurisdictions such as the Lake Barcroft Community.
- Meantime, Lake Barcroft Community property owners have made property improvements thus augmenting official aggregate assessed Barcroft valuation to over \$400,000,000.

*Burning the bond* was only a symbolic gesture, but future years promise a stronger community effort, a better lake and new challenges ahead.

*Stuart Finley*



*June 24, 2001  
Photo by Sally Alne*



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