



# The Neighborhood Newsletter

Volume 15 Number 3

The On-Line Issue, June, 2008



## ANNOUNCING OUR NEW WEBSITE!

By Alyssa Krinsky Clossey (*Oak Knoll*)

[www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org](http://www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org)

*Editor's Note: With this issue, we're very glad to introduce a new **Newsletter** web site which we think is good news for all of us. And we also introduce our new Webmaster, Alyssa Krinsky Clossey of Oak Knoll, definitely good news as well. Alyssa helps manage about 70 different web sites in her job at Tufts University, plus the Bishop School web pages back home, so taking on one more site comes (we hope) fairly easily. We are very grateful that Alyssa has come forward to work with us. Her story about the site, along with a screen shot, is just below. We hope you'll check out our new site with its many features, and especially its ways to get involved. Your suggestions for improvements and additions are always welcome. With your input, we can learn how best to use electronic technology to serve all of us.*

*So we are evolving, even though the print **Newsletter** will be continuing just as before. Yet if we do it right, and with your continued participation and support, we can have the best of both print and electronic worlds, using both media to build a stronger and more vibrant neighborhood together.*

We are pleased to announce that the **Neighborhood Newsletter** website has undergone a complete redesign as well as a new web address located at [neighborhoodnewsletter.org](http://neighborhoodnewsletter.org). From its cool blue tones reminiscent of Arlington's Spy Pond, to its warm "Red-Line T" colors, the website is designed to represent the unique aspects of Arlington that we have all grown to love. The Neighborhood Newsletter's signature banner has been used throughout the website depicting people engaging in everyday life activities in Arlington. The photographs throughout the site include a handful of familiar neighborhood landmarks including the Arlington Friends of the Drama, the Whittemore-Robbins House, the Robbins Library, and the Native American statue by Cyrus Dallin located near Arlington Center's Town Hall.

You can browse the website to learn about the history of the **Neighborhood Newsletter**, read current and past volumes, review our sponsors, enjoy photographs of the neighborhood, download a service referral list, donate to the Newsletter, distribute it to your fellow neighbors, find out ways to get involved, or contact us with questions. To receive the latest Newsletter news and announcements online, we especially encourage you to add your email address to our growing neighborhood list. Please sign up now at: [www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org](http://www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org).

We welcome your feedback of the website as well as the printed Newsletter. Please let us know your thoughts and submit your comments/suggestions to:

[www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org/signupFeedback.php](http://www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org/signupFeedback.php)

Thanks!



## GRAFFITI IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

With great dismay, we are noticing an increase in graffiti in our neighborhood. Recently targeted areas include the Arlington Children's Center and International School on Irving Street, Menotomy Rocks Park, Johnnie's Foodmaster, and neighborhood residences, as well as the Ottoson and High Schools.

Not only is the "tagging" a disruption to the beauty of our neighborhood, but also some of it is vulgar and explicit in nature. Removal of the graffiti is a time-consuming and difficult task; the recent Menotomy Rocks Park graffiti took four hours to remove. Police Department, town representatives, Selectmen, residents, and others have expressed a critical need to strategize a plan for how to ensure graffiti removal, as well as to eliminate it from the Town.

Let's do what we can to keep our neighborhood and town free of such crimes. Please keep a watchful eye out for criminal behavior, and report it immediately to the Arlington Police Department at (781) 316-3900.



## WELCOMING THE TIBETAN BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

By Bill Berkowitz (*Pelham Terrace*)

If organized religion is in decline, you'd not know it by our neighborhood.

Within our approximate borders, you will find Pleasant Street Congregational, St. John's Episcopal, First Baptist, Unitarian Universalist, and Highrock churches, with St. Agnes and Calvary Methodist very close by. Nor does this count the more personal religious and spiritual practices we may follow.

And those practices are diversifying. One of the newest spiritual centers in our neighborhood is the Drikung Meditation Center, a home for Tibetan Buddhist practice diagonally across from Foodmaster, on Bartlett Avenue. You may have noticed the prayer flags strung outside its doors. What do they mean; and what is this Center about?

The Drikung Center has been here since March, 2007, when it moved from Somerville, seeking a larger space. Several members and occasional visitors live there together with their Spiritual Director, Lama Konchok Sonam. They like our neighborhood, for many of the same reasons we do: "Arlington is a special place," says Mary Burke, a Center resident and board member. "It has both intimacy and quiet; and it's close to transportation and the city."

Tibetan Buddhism has many facets to it, but at its core are familiar values and hopes: love and happiness for all beings; freedom from suffering; compassion; equanimity and peace of mind. Drikung is one of several lineages, or branches, of Tibetan

practice, tracing its origins to a 7<sup>th</sup> century monastery. As for the prayer flags, they represent the five elements of the universe – Air, Earth, Fire, Water, and Space – each in a different color. According to belief, displaying these flags both brings positive energy from the universe and also radiates that energy outward. The sentiments prompting the flags are blown by the wind, spreading good will and compassion throughout the neighborhood and beyond, so bringing benefits to all.

Inside its doors, the Center in many ways looks like an ordinary neighborhood home. There's a kitchen, dining room, and common areas downstairs, living and sleeping quarters upstairs, a back yard. One difference is a shrine room, to which very recently has been added a full-sized statue of the Buddha. Another is that part of the downstairs is used for meditation practice.

The Center holds meditation sessions on Sunday mornings from 10:00 – noon, open to anyone. A library serves the public as well. There are occasional special programs and retreats, and Tibetan language instruction. Beyond that, the Center is open most times for all who might wish to learn, study, or talk, whether about spiritual issues, health, or general life concerns.

Lama Sonam himself studied and practiced earlier in Nepal, then in India, and then in Taiwan before coming to the U.S. He was first invited here in 2001, to be part of a special healing ceremony for those who died on 9/11. After some time in Tampa, he learned that Boston needed a spiritual director; he came and stayed. While he may appear different from Western spiritual leaders, with shaved head and dark red clothing ("My monk's uniform," he says), in everyday life he's like any good neighbor. You may see him walking around the neighborhood, sometimes to the park.

He'll stop and chat, exchange greetings with neighbors, perhaps admire their dogs. And if someone wants to visit the Center, just to talk, they are welcome. "They can come over and have a cup of yak butter tea. Or I will make dinner for them." (Mary: "The Lama is a good cook.") "Or they can come and talk about problems. I will teach them meditation techniques to help them, or I will pray for them. "And if someone wants to invite me over, I could go," Lama Sonam says. "I will go visit and send prayers to people. Or if they want to invite me for Thanksgiving, I could do that; if [with a smile] they make me a tofu turkey, as I am vegetarian."

In the longer term, the Center may be looking for more space, to become a true retreat and pilgrimage center for the wider community. But for the present, Lama Sonam and Center residents are glad to be here. "I live here, on Bartlett Avenue," Lama Sonam says. "I want to know the neighbors. I want to know how I can help the neighborhood. Whatever they ask, I will try to help."

The Drikung Meditation Center is located at 15 Bartlett Avenue. Meditation sessions and visits are open to everyone. To visit the Center, or talk to the Lama, it's best to call for an appointment, at 1-888-390-5580. More information is available at [www.drikungboston.org](http://www.drikungboston.org).

*On Saturday, June 28, a special public ceremony will be held to introduce and display the new Jowo Rinpoche statue, a life-size replica of Buddha Shakyamuni, considered to be one of Tibet's most significant religious icons, and one that confers great blessings. Prayers will be held from 10:00 to noon at the Center, followed by an open-house presentation from 2:00-5:00 at Arlington Town Hall. All are invited and welcome.*

Discuss our articles or write your own on our Newsletter Articles Blog:  
[www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org/articles/](http://www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org/articles/)



## ENERGY SMACKDOWN!

By Mary Cummings (*Jason Street*)

Carol and Harold Forbes and their son, Ben (*Jason Street*) are smacking down their carbon footprint with the help of a Medford Community TV reality show! The program was the brainchild of Donald Kelly, president and CEO of BrainShift.com, Inc. who saw it as an opportunity to encourage people to reduce the amount of carbon they add to the environment.

In the program's first season, three Medford families were able to shrink their carbon footprint by at least 50% to 70%. In the second season, thirty families, including ten each from Arlington, Cambridge, and Medford will compete and a number of "companion" families will go along for the green ride without the competitive stress. Participants for this season were chosen to represent a wide range of lifestyles. Annie LaCourt, Selectman, has been helping to organize the program in Arlington and she reports that we have 32 families involved.

The program starts with evaluations of each family's carbon footprint by MassSave (NStar and National Grid) and continues with regular meetings throughout the year, consul-

tations with experts in the field and a long list of simple lifestyle changes from which to choose. The carbon footprint scale used to set goals and determine progress measures the number of pounds of carbon a family adds to the environment based on their use of electricity, natural gas, auto travel, air travel, and land fill.

Carol first learned about the program from a friend who works on the Smackdown staff. She then read an article in the Arlington Advocate last April and pursued the idea further. Already actively working to reduce their carbon footprint, the Forbes' enthusiastically applied and were accepted as a companion family. Companion families don't have to actually compete or appear on the TV program but will benefit from the same support and resources that are available to the competing families. All participants are to act as "seeds" by sharing what they learn with others in the community. Carol's and Harold's enthusiasm for cutting carbon production is indeed contagious.

When I first heard about the program I envisioned expensive projects like insulating buildings, replacing appliances and cars, and adding sun panels to the roof. But, according to the Forbeses, we can make a big difference with minor changes in our lifestyles too. Recycling, composting, and driving less are but a few of the things we can do. How we travel, what we purchase, and what we eat all make a difference. Harold noted that beef and other red meats are the foods that have the largest negative impact on the environment while chicken has the low-

est impact.

There are lots of public and private organizations supporting the reduction of carbon footprints in Arlington. The Energy Smackdown program is a cooperative effort of BrainShift Foundation in partnership with the Kendall Foundation, National Grid, NStar, Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships, Massachusetts Climate Action Network, the cities of Medford, and Cambridge and the Town of Arlington. The Vision 2020 Sustainable Arlington Committee developed a plan which was adopted by the Board of Selectmen and approved by Town Meeting. The plan can be viewed on their website which contains lots of other helpful information and links.

Will and I have been turning off lights, using compact fluorescent bulbs, conserving water, and recycling paper and plastic for quite a while. Listening to Carol and Harold describe the things they have learned and how they plan to smack down their carbon footprint has jolted me into more real action. The Neighborhood Newsletter website now has a blog on which we can share our suggestions, experiences, resources, and successes as we smack down the neighborhood's carbon footprint. Are you with us?

Here are some easy first steps:

- Turn off the lights
- Turn down the heat and air conditioners
- Recycle (Get a larger recycle bin and a rain barrel to collect water for your lawn and garden at the Public Works building on Grove Street.)
- Use fluorescent light bulbs
- Use reusable grocery bags
- Walk whenever possible
- Take the T instead of the car
- Carpool
- Buy locally produced food products
- Cut down on the red meat you eat (beneficial to your health, too)
- Bunch errands for efficiency

### CHECKOUT THESE LINKS:

Our Going Green blog: [www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org/ecoblog/](http://www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org/ecoblog/)

Energy Smackdown website: [www.energysmackdown.com/](http://www.energysmackdown.com/)

Carbonfootprint.com: [www.carbonfootprint.com/minimisecfp.html](http://www.carbonfootprint.com/minimisecfp.html)

Sustainable Arlington Committee: [www.sustainablearlington.org/massep](http://www.sustainablearlington.org/massep)

## THE TOOL

By Miriam Levine (*Academy Street*)

*I'm in the garden on my knees, combing debris from dead iris leaves that stream against earth as if earth were water*

*raking leaves in patterns of flow like river currents.  
Siberian irises make their own mulch from dead leaves*

*attached to stubs of old stalks—leaves flattened but seeming to float like long hair combed to filaments when the swimmer floats*

*face down. Other leaves dropped last fall from silver saplings—maple & shadblow—nothing but filigree crumbling to powder.*

*The vetch stays, too. It's always here—like fleas. Siberians can take chokers circling their necks & still come floating in white-blown drifts.*

*I'm a tool for peeling back winterkill from chartreuse tip & blue squill, crocus winking up through junk. I love what does not caress me.*

*I read somewhere that "Artists must be transparent as glass and completely objective." Who says! I'd have to drain my blood—metaphorically speaking. I'd be dead.*

*Who knows why I give myself to plants—because I love color?  
Birth close to death?*

*Iris-shoots up-thrust through mulch. A rain of violets.  
Andromeda of a thousand tiaras! Dripping unchained keys of the oaks.*

© Miriam Levine



## A PRIZE-WINNING POET

*Some of us are poets when the rare mood strikes, but a talented few of us are professionals, and a tiny percent of those few win poetry prizes. We're fortunate that our neighbor Miriam Levine is a prize-winning poet living in our midst. More information about Miriam and her new poetry collection can be found at [www.miriamlevine.com](http://www.miriamlevine.com).*

*At our request, Miriam sent this note about herself, and as a bonus a new poem, about gardening, created especially for us.*

Miriam Levine can often be found in the garden at 26A Academy Street, where she lives with her husband John Lane. They continue their work in the garden, which they started thirty-five years ago. Levine's most recent collection of poems, *The Dark Opens*, her seventh book, has won the 2007 Autumn House Poetry Prize, chosen by Mark Doty. Many of the poems are set in the garden and at Hill's Pond. Miriam sent us some comments about working at home: "Now that I've left my college teaching job, I have more time to write. I've always gotten ideas as I walked or when I've worked in the garden. Now most days I walk in Arlington, where I often see neighbors. I come home to write. Some days my work goes well; some days it's like digging up stones, but I keep at it. It's a

thrill when a phrase or line appears like a volunteer plant. Freeing!

"One year a Virginia blue bell shot up out front. We didn't buy it. We didn't plant it. Vetch also showed up. I've grown to like it. Vetch seems immortal. I don't call it a weed anymore. Old world vetch was used as feed for domesticated animals; people also ate the seeds. Vetch is ancient. Since it's a legume, I assume it enriches the soil. As you can see from this new poem, I love irises. These are Siberian, wildly prolific. Gardens are wonderful for beauty and creepiness."



## WHAT DID YOU SAY?

By Cindy Starks (*Monadnock Road*)

My family was fortunate enough to be one of the many families hosting students from our sister city of Nagaokakyo, Japan this April. It was an experience that I am sure Saki (our exchange student) and none of us will soon forget. Not only did we learn a lot, but we also made friendships that I hope will last a lifetime. Looking back on the experience, I am ashamed to say that we really did not do anything to prepare ourselves for the arrival of our guest. We did not strive to learn Japanese, their customs, or have any Japanese food in our house. Sadly, none of this even occurred to us until we were smack dab in the middle of the week. Despite our lack of Japanese, we managed to communicate with Saki and she with us. The first thing we figured out was that we had to slow down our speaking rate. Even if you don't think you speak fast, as an American you speak English fast to someone who is not a native speaker.

I received a great piece of advice on verbal communication from my friend Carol Band, who reminded me to use phrases from phrase books rather than common sayings. For example, Saki had an easier time understanding the phrase, "What occupations do your mother and father have?" than she did with, "What do your mother and father do?" We also found that if we drew pictures, we quickly were on the same topic and could carry the conversation from there. By the fifth day, we had conquered communication and Saki was another member of our house.

What actually worked best for me was to include Saki in every day tasks. Whether we did laundry together, went food shopping, or prepared a meal, we had a great time and exchanged much information in the time we got to spend together. The one person who got closest to Saki, was of course, my daughter, Morgan. She and Saki are

the same age and their friendship seemed instantaneous. Morgan spent hours showing Saki how to play every game in our house. From chess and checkers to Blockus, every game we had was hauled out and played. In addition to games, Morgan discovered that reading Dr. Seuss books together was another great way to communicate. It was great to hear them laughing together. Surprisingly, even our dog Pepper played a major role. It turns out that Saki has a dog in Japan and so she instantly bonded with Pepper and through him and spending time with the dog, we not only managed good communication, but I think it helped her feel at home.

On the day that Saki and the other students left, there was not a dry eye among us. We were all sad to see her go, although very happy for the time we had with her. We learned that we all have much to learn and much to teach. We are already committed to visiting Saki in Japan next summer and as a family we have vowed not to go until we know a bit more Japanese!



**“MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING”?**  
**By Marianne Curren (Hillsdale Road)**

No, it’s definitely about something special, as Shakespeare in the Park prepares to celebrate eight successful years with a free performance of the play. One of the most popular offerings by the Arlington Center for the Arts, co-sponsored by Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park and Friends of Robbins Farm Park, the 2008 family-friendly program will take place Sunday, July 27, at 5 p.m. in Menotomy Rocks Park.

Often a young person’s first encounter with Shakespeare, the event has provided a positive introduction for scores of

children in town. (In fact, children have been known to re-enact scenes at home for their neighbors on at least one occasion.) Whatever the play, the result has always been enthusiastic appreciation from an audience of all ages. And this reception has not gone unnoticed by directors, performers, and crew, who have repeatedly commented on the wonderful quality of spectators here.

The annual tradition was born when Betsy Baldwin, long a follower of the Trinity Repertory Company in Rhode Island, learned of the Company’s traveling summer Shakespeare troupe. The Arlington Council for the Arts, where Betsy was very active, teamed up with the park’s Friends to bring the first production here in 2001. The Arlington Cultural Council contributed grants for the next three years to help offset some of the expenses.

For the first several years, the Trinity players brought the Bard to the parks; most recently, The New England Shakespeare Company from New Hampshire has engaged the crowds. The groups have typically staged Shakespeare’s comedies, light and accessible fun with a natural setting, audience interaction, and professional innovation. Alternating between Robbins Farm and Menotomy Rocks, the plays have attracted up to 800 people, many with picnics and blankets in tow. While there have been a few “steamy” productions given the area’s summer weather, rain has caused only one cancellation, and for two years Arlington actually hosted two different productions.

Now under the auspices of the Arlington Center for the Arts, Shakespeare in the Park still benefits from the involvement of the parks’ supporters. Neighborhood fundraising events and donations at the performances have helped to keep the program on an even financial keel. Sales of desserts, beverages, and other items at the event also help defray costs. And as “Much Ado About Nothing” marks the eighth anniversary of Shakespeare in the Park, theater lovers throughout town can look forward to – and back at – their very own midsummer night’s dream.



**THE BABY GAME**

By Elizabeth and Christopher Wren  
*(Hillsdale Road)*

*This is a window into the imaginative play of students enjoying the playground renovation at the Bishop School. Many thanks to the Bishop Playground Improvement Committee and others in the community who helped to make the renovation possible.*

The Sisters had recovered the arm. It was a feat of extreme bravery: the Sharks were vicious this time of day. The Mother had sent them so that the Baby could have her arm back. The Hospital on the Ship could easily re-attach a severed limb.

The Travelers seem forever fated to risk life and limb crossing the dangerous Bay. They’ve been trapped in these Shark infested waters ever since the Ship’s anchor snagged on a Lobster Trap, ending their voyage to the Great Destination. Lucky that they snagged near the New Home, with its Food and Supplies. Tragic that New Home is not the paradise promised as the Great Destination... so they cannot simply abandon the Ship. They wrestle a hard life out of the two locations: Ship and New Home.

New Home is an archipelago of wind-blasted, black islets. The Travelers can rest here after the frantic crossings. They dry their soaked hair in the hot sun. They gather the things they need from the land, but they cannot stay long on these inhospitable lumps of rock. Soon they must cross back to the Ship. They rest and prepare, hoping to outrun the Sharks on the return crossing. The Ship offers sanctuary, at least for a while. The Landing where they will crawl out of the water. The wondrous Hospital where they cure the wounds inflicted by the Sharks. The perilous bridge to the Engine. The glorious, glittering Engine that must be maintained for heat and light, and to power the Hospital of course, but alas, never again to move the Ship.

The endless cycle: New Home to Ship, Ship to New Home, and always the looming threat of the great Sharks guarding the stretch of water separating the two.

“Actually they’re small Sharks.”

“Small?”

“They’re the wood chips. We walk on them.”

“So many Sharks teaming in the waters that it was said a brave Traveler could walk across the Bay on their backs, without even getting wet.”

“Sometimes they get in your shoes too, and then they fall out in the Ship, so there are some Sharks in the Ship too.”

“So you like the new playground?”

“Yeah. It’s a creative place!”

Elizabeth wants everyone to know that “It’s just a game, so don’t be scared!”



## SUGGESTIONS FOR SUMMER READING

By Dolores Schueler (*Brunswick Road*)

The following books were highly recommended by members of our neighborhood book group and a fellow librarian:

Our book group recently read and thoroughly enjoyed Sara Gruen’s Water for Elephants (2007). Gruen brings her big top characters alive in this story about traveling with a circus during the Depression. It is delightful, warm, rich and very engrossing.

Another intensely passionate story is Everything is Illuminated (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer. In Foer’s book, a young man sets out to find the woman who may or may not have saved his grandfather from the Nazis. This first novel is “comic and

tragic, but always passionate, wildly inventive, and touched with an indelible humanity.”

Alan Bennett’s book Writing Home (2006) is recommended as a wonderfully entertaining collection of reminiscences from one of Britain’s leading playwrights.

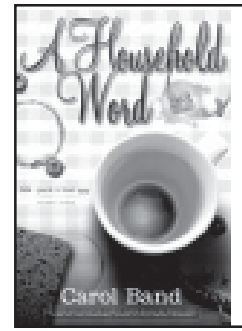
If you appreciate the beauty of armchair travel, Bill Bryson has written a number of detailed and hilarious accounts of travel on various continents. My favorites are In a Sunburned Country (2000)(Australia) and A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian trail (1998).

The No-Nonsense Guides are good for readers who like relatively short but comprehensive books on particular subjects. The following two titles were specifically suggested: The No-Nonsense Guide to Water (2004) by Maggie Black details the issues surrounding water rights, distribution, technology, irrigation, and land use. The other title is The No-Nonsense Guide to Women’s Rights (2004) by Nikki van der Gaag. This book gives some disturbing evidence that women’s rights are still a big issue in this post-feminist age.

And one last recommendation is a story set in New Auburn, Wisconsin, called Population, 485: Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren at a Time (2002) by Michael Perry.

Mr. Perry grew up in this small town. He has now returned, and having joined the volunteer fire department, he tells an often humorous tale interspersed with heartbreak and tragedy.

**The Neighborhood Newsletter** is produced through generous contributions from neighbors, the assistance of Swifty Printing, and the underwriting support of Judy Weinberg of Venner Road and RE/MAX Leading Edge Real Estate, judylynnweinberg@gmail.com.



## HOUSEHOLD WORD

By Mary Cummings (*Jason Street*)

About Carol Band (*Bartlett Avenue*)

“My husband is neat and I am, well . . . not. . . Sometimes . . . his drive to tidy makes me crazy – like when I park at a meter downtown and there’s no loose change under the floor mats because he has just vacuumed the car . . .”

I laughed out loud through the entire 161 pages of Carol Band’s new book *A Household Word*. The book is a collection of articles Carol has written about her children in *The Boston Parents’ Paper* for the past ten years. It’s a delightful, episodic adventure through motherhood punctuated with characterizations and parental philosophy. I simply had to ask Carol to tell us about the book and her career as a writer and share her answers with you in The Newsletter.

How did Carol get into writing in the first place? “I was a journalism major in college at Boston University. When I graduated, I began writing for local newspapers, then moved into public relations and marketing. After my first two kids were born, I started working as an editor at *The Boston Parents’ Paper*. I worked out of my house - mostly in the middle of the night and during naps, and kept writing for them and for other clients.”

When did she discover her talent? Puhleese! “I have always written stuff – I still have notebooks full of hugely embarrassing, angst-ridden teenage poetry that I wrote in study hall.”

How did the column get started and what kept it going? “I was editing the entertainment section of *The Parents’ Paper* and tended to interject personal anecdotes. The Managing Editor asked me

to try my hand at writing a humor column, and so I did. When the paper got sold to a national chain, I was lucky that they took my column along.”

Who are the subjects of her musings? “My kids, Nathan – who just graduated from college(!) and is back in Arlington looking for gainful employment, my daughter, Perry, who is a student at Clark University in Worcester, and son Lewis, a freshman at AHS as well as my husband, Harris, neighbors, dead pets, broken appliances and moldy items in the back of the fridge have all been inspiration for columns.”

How have her kids’ feelings about the column changed, if at all, over the years? “Occasionally, they will bring up the subject of royalties – as in ‘We should be paid for providing you with material.’ I tell them that whatever I make off my column and book will pay for their therapy. Really, though - they don’t pay much attention. It’s just their mom screaming ‘Shut up you miserable brats....I’m trying to write a humorous column on parenting!’”

How did Carol come to put it all in a book? “I’ve been writing the column for ten years and it seemed like a good time to pull something together. Of course, I first vowed to do a book four years ago and it’s taken me this long to actually do it.”

Will she continue to write the column? If not, where will we look for her writing from now on? “I will continue to write the column, but am looking for venues for new material – perhaps a column about mid-life. That sounds like a barrel of laughs, doesn’t it?”

Where can we get a copy of *A Household Word*? “It’s available on Amazon.com and at Barnes and Noble.com. It’s at the Porter Square Bookstore and the Book Rack in Arlington or you can get a copy by coming over to my house at 57 Bartlett Ave.”

If you haven’t yet read the book and are not already dying to get a copy, here’s one more tempting taste of Carol Band’s parenting wit and wisdom from *A Household Word*:

“To reduce my family’s carbon foot-

print further, I’ve also cut way back on how frequently I do laundry. After all, in a month of average use (and my family is way above average) the washing machine drains about 15,000 gallons of potable water, as well as more than 600 watts of electricity. . . . So when the kids complain ‘Mooommmmm, I don’t have any clean socks!’ I just say, ‘Turn them inside out and they’ll be good for another week.’”

## ARLINGTON: MY TAKE

By Judy Weinberg (*Venner Road*)

The brainchild of **Lorraine Sullivan**, our neighbor on Jason Street, *Arlington: My Take* is currently showing at the Arlington Center for the Arts. Lorraine has been mulling over the concept of this exhibit for some time, and the show has been a year in the making.

The idea was to ask residents to take pictures as they went about their day, with the hope of capturing the essence of this wonderful town. A cross-section of people photographed what is relevant to them: a secret spot, the bike path, a playground. She pored through hundreds of images to ensure that the display gave a true, diverse portrayal of Arlington. Forty-four Arlingtonians, young and old, are a part of this show, with a fair amount of them from our own *Newsletter* neighborhood.

Lorraine was impressed by the breadth of the submissions, and sometimes pleasantly surprised by the subject matter. As **Peter Bloom** is an avid gardener, and can often be seen tending the traffic islands at the corner of Mass. Ave and Jason St., Lorraine expected his pictures to be of gardens. The four of his photos used in the exhibit however, show the unique tableaux that he sees as he rides his bike throughout town.

**John Pickle’s** picture posts at Menotomy Rocks allow park visitors



to take images of the same spot and share them through an on-line photo sharing site. Eight of his photographs of Hill’s Pond at different times of year are on display. **Phil Young** is often seen around town with his sheepdog Molly in tow, and she figures prominently in his photographs, as does a picture of the Animal Control Officer van. His picture of the “purple fence” elicits knowing nods of its location.

**Dave Ackerman** commutes by bicycle to Harvard Square every day, no matter what the weather, and his photos of Mass. Ave., taken while riding, are unique and death-defying! Among **Susie Goldman’s** images are the Foodmaster Bakeshop display case and the Jason Russell House during Town Day. **Jessie Young** takes the 77 bus to work, and includes her fellow commuters as part of her pictorial. **Gwen Chasan’s** display includes images of Trader Joe’s shopping carts, the Starbucks patio, and mounds of watermelons.

Other **Newsletter** neighbors who are a part of this exhibit include **Cindy Starks**, **Catherine Chaille**, and **Steve LaFond**.

The incredible publicity and positive feedback has been very gratifying to Lorraine. Other towns have approached her to learn how they can replicate this exhibit, and she and the Arts Council are putting together a “how-to” manual to assist them. The Arlington Library wants to archive it, and they are working together to publish a book, that will include the photographs, to remain in the library collection.

We all have our impressions of Arlington, and it’s fun to view what our neighbors see as they make their way through this town and how they see it. *Arlington: My Take* runs through June 20<sup>th</sup>; the hours are Monday to Friday from 9-5. The show is in the Gibbs Gallery at the Arlington Center for the Arts, 41 Foster Street in East Arlington. There is no admission charge, although donations are always welcome!

## STEVE'S PEEVES

By Steve Johnson (*Jason Street*)



Leaf blowers. I hate them. I contend that it's faster and neater to just push a broom or pull a rake. I mean, c'mon—how lazy can you be? And the NOISE! As I write, the stillness of a beautiful day is rent by the constant drone of a gasoline-powered nuisance. Those little two-stroke engines are among the worst polluters on Earth, and are probably the least well-maintained, meaning that the emissions problem is compounded.

Every time I see or hear someone using one, I ask, "Is this really necessary?" and conclude "NO—keep your dust cloud to your self". Others have turned reaction into policy: several towns have proposed or enacted regulations on the use of such tools. How do you feel? Should we have a town-wide policy, or even just a good old-fashioned uprising with rakes and brooms? How about just asking our landscape companies not to use blowers in this neighborhood? Let's discuss this issue on our new EcoBlog:

[www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org/ecoblog/](http://www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org/ecoblog/)

## ARLINGTON FRIENDS OF THE DRAMA CELEBRATES 85 YEARS OF LOCAL THEATRE!

Judy Weinberg (*Venner Road*)

In February 1923, an article was published in a local paper, announcing the formation of the Friends of the Drama, and inviting all Arlington residents to join. The first production followed on May 10<sup>th</sup> of that year, and Arlington Friends of the Drama was born. Now celebrating its 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we're lucky to have such a wonderful theatre company right in our neighborhood.

The Friends have been in their current location on Academy Street since the 1930's, when they purchased the former St. John's Episcopal Church with their winning bid of \$8,200. One of the 10 oldest continually operating community theatres in the country, AFD is a slice of local history.

Mrs. Cyrus Dallin was a founding member, chairman, and occasional playwright. The group had the foresight to save newspaper articles, programs, and photographs, and it's fascinating to browse through the volumes of scrapbooks, kept updated over the decades, and housed in the green room of the theatre.

There is an absorbing account of the Friends in the book *Stuff of Dreams*, by Leah Hager Cohen. This accomplished author selected Arlington Friends of the Drama to tell the story of what is involved with mounting a production at a community theatre; the book is available at Robbins Library and it's a great read.

The theatre is a treasure trove of behind-the-scenes resources, with a jam packed costume room, state of the art lighting and sound booth, and even a plaque in one of the

green room bathrooms stating "Richard Gere Showered Here"!

If you've never been to the theatre, you're missing out on a terrific neighborhood resource! The final play of this season, *Last Night of Ballyhoo*, will be shown the weekends of June 13-14, and June 22-24.

I've enjoyed volunteering at the theater in various capacities, from working on props and sets, to ushering, to providing refreshments for business meetings. If you're at all interested in knowing more about the theatre, or have harbored desires to get involved but didn't know how to start, please feel free to contact me at [judyweinberg@remax.net](mailto:judyweinberg@remax.net)



## SUMMER SOLSTICE FUN IN MENOTOMY ROCKS PARK

By Marianne Curren (*Hillsdale Road*)

It's almost time for Litha, also known as the Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year. Druids, bonfires, ancient dances — all are associated with this Solstice, which is considered the beginning of the summer season. Midway between planting and harvest, the Summer Solstice (or Midsummer) celebrates fertility, the promise of bounty, and the power of the sun at its height.

The Druids celebrated the day as the wedding of heaven (God as Sun King) and earth (Goddess as Mother Earth). And Midsummer's Eve is one of three annual spirit nights, when the Òveils are between the two worlds. But the Summer Solstice has been a time of festivity across centuries and cultures throughout the world. From Ancient Egyptians, Chinese, Chumash Indians of California, Aztecs and Indigenous Europeans to traditions of modern day, people have reveled in the strength and the energy of the late-June sun with their own unique rituals.

Let's celebrate the warmth and light in our own little corner. Come and share in a Summer Solstice Celebration on Sunday, June 22, in the front field of Menotomy Rocks Park. Bring your meal and a dessert, along with anything Solstice to share, and we'll make merry from 5 p.m. until dusk.

### CONTACT THE NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER

We always welcome your letters, articles, or suggestions, as well as any donations you might be able to make. To contact Mary Cummings, Editor:

Write to: 135 Jason St.

E-mail: [Jhitesnews@comcast.net](mailto:Jhitesnews@comcast.net)

Website: [www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org](http://www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org)

To make a contribution to **The Neighborhood Newsletter**: Make checks payable to "Menotomy Rocks Neighborhood Association" and send to Bill Berkowitz at 12 Pelham Terrace. Thank you for your support!