



The Neighborhood Newsletter

Volume 15, Number 1

The Leaping Issue March, 2008

Thank You, Everyone!

Remember the envelopes we placed into our last issue to encourage **Newsletter** contributions? That was a first for us; we weren't sure what would happen.

We found out soon enough, for your response was absolutely super. Through mid-January, we raised nearly \$3500, from 116 separate Newsletter households.

With your help, we exceeded even our own hopes and expectations.* All this means we're in pretty good financial shape for the year ahead. At some point after that, we're likely to be asking again; but that's in the future.

More than that: With many of your contributions, we also received handwritten notes of support. Everyone likes to feel supported, ourselves included. It makes us feel good – and it vividly reminds us that we have a lot to live up to.

We are very grateful for your donations; yet we are even more grateful to know that there are so many of you out there who care about the **Newsletter**, and about our neighborhood, and who are willing to provide both material and moral support to help make our lives together better and stronger. We are hopeful, for all of us.

At this point, we've run out of words. So thank you, from deep down.

* It was John Worden (Jason Street) who suggested the envelopes to us. Thank you, John.



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.



APPRECIATED VOLUNTEERS AT MENOTOMY

By MaryAnna Foskett (*Brantwood Road*)

Many thanks to the hard-working VOLUNTEERS who contributed their time, energy, and enthusiasm during 2007 to help rid Menotomy Rocks Park of invasive plants and trash – and, after the park renovation – to plant 8 trees, 100 shrubs, 128 ferns, grasses and vines, as well as many perennials – all native to our part of the world:

Jane Auger	Lorri Berenberg
David Bean	Lolly Bennett
Neil Budzinski	Eliza Burden
Melissa Carr	Paul Conway
Michelle Deziel	MaryAnna Foskett
Monica Freeman	Peggy Gardner
Richard Goldberg	Julia Harper
Jo Hartel	Ed Heck
Peter Howard	Carol Kalauskas
Peter Kalauskas	Judy Krulewitz
Tom Ladenburg	Judy Larsen
Suzi Lubar	Anna Magill-Dohan
Biff Maier	Sylvain Malfroy-Camine
Don Mattheisen	Deborah Matthews
Raphael Meister	Laura Quinto
Bill & Ellen Reed	Elizabeth Rehfeld
Doug Rosner	Clarissa Rowe
Greg Ruccio	Ted Siegan
Emil Valdes	Judy Weinberg
Elizabeth Woods	Phil Young
& Nancy, Atwood, Charlotte & Andy	

Thanks, too, to all those who clean up trash on a daily basis and make the Park safe and beautiful for us all.



ALLONS JOUER AU TENNIS, OR "IT'S ONLY A CRUTCH"

By Louise Goldstein (*Shawnee Road*)

People in Arlington are very active and athletic. There are bikers in Spandex outfits going so fast that they leave my poor Corolla behind like an unwanted relative at a family gathering. There are kids shooting hoops, playing soccer, and learning the martial arts. There are joggers and rollerbladers, swimmers and rock climbers. Me? I'm a librarian. I read about things. I decided that this would change on the day of my 49th birthday. For those of you not in the know, 49 is the new 29.

Accordingly, I called my friend Carol.

"Carol," I said. "We need to do something athletic in honor of my birthday. What do you suggest?"

"How about hiking in the Blue Hills?" said Carol.

"No," I said, "the Arlington fifth graders just went to Science Camp where they had to hike every day. Andre [my son] needs a change."

"I know!" said Carol. "We can play tennis. They have courts in Lexington and we can go out for pizza afterward."

"Perfect!" I said, not bothering to worry about the fact that I don't really know how to play tennis. Tennis, after all, is important for a child's development. I thought back fondly to the five or so minutes that my father spent trying to teach me the sport before realizing that a monkey on a typewriter had a better chance of hitting the tennis ball than I did.

"Dave," I said. "We're going to play tennis in honor of my birthday." Dave didn't bother pointing out that he hadn't played tennis in more than fifteen years.

I guess I had that look in my eye, the one that says, "We have to do this or my little heart will be broken."

We headed to Carol's house and admired her healthy vegetable garden that was still in bloom on Sunday, October 21st. Not only is Carol athletic, she also has a green thumb. When we got to the tennis courts, Andre and Rick took a position on one side of the net. Carol and Dave stood on the other side. I took my favorite position, seated by the fence ready to catch any errant yellow balls.

"Goldie," said Dave. "Come and play."

"No, I'll play later." I said. I had done my part, I felt, by transporting my little family to a healthy and athletic venue. This was enough exertion for one day.

Dave was playing hard. Andre was hitting one ball after the other.

"Come on," Carol said. "You can play with me on the other court. It will be fun."

When I realized that Carol would persist with me the way she did with her vegetables and wouldn't take no for an answer, I got up reluctantly. I did hit the occasional ball when it came up and kissed my racket. Then, it happened. David fell to the ground.

"Oh, no!" we all cried in unison.

"I feel dizzy," said Dave.

We drove him to Carol's house and applied ice to his injury. Then we headed to Bruce's. You could have knocked me over with a feather on the following Tuesday when I got the call.

"I've ruptured my Achilles tendon," Dave said. "I may need surgery."

My vocal cords failed me.

"Hello, hello? Anyone there?" David asked.

"Yes," I croaked weakly.

Dave decided not to have the surgery. He got a cast that went from the bottom of his right foot to his upper thigh. As of December, he had a festive Christmas Green cast from the bottom of his right foot up to his knee. He has missed a lot of work. Andre and I have added shoveling to our winter sports repertoire. I am trying to train the cat, Zuzu, to shovel. She claims that since her fur is white, no one will be able to see her and she might get injured.

I have a new philosophy about this whole family athletic thing. My feeling now is this: It's only a crutch. As I've said to Dave on many an occasion, "Let's just head over to Barnes and Noble and read a good book." After all, literacy is very important. Andre gets lots of exercise playing with his friends. There is no need for us to go overboard with this sports thing. If anyone needs information about sports, I'll be happy to look it up. Just give me a call at the library.



JHITESNEWS.COM
(NO LONGER .ORG)

We have a website with lots and lots of potential in the hands of the right master. Could that be you? Check out www.jhitesnews.com and imagine how much more we could share there.

Note: jhitesnews.org does not always get you there but jhitesnews.com does.



A NEW FAMILY TRADITION

By Donna and Chris Wren (*Hillsdale Road*)

On a warm sunny morning last May our family found itself surrounded by scores of people, ankle-deep in the Lower Mystic Lake. Hundreds of herring swam around our feet; it was our job to catch them gently and place them in buckets. As the water poured from the dam between the two lakes, we stood in the current and sat our borrowed nets in the water, waiting. Every once in a while we were rewarded with one or two fish in our nets. Into the buckets they went, to be peered at suspiciously by our two-year-old daughter: “Fishies?”

What in the world were we doing? Well, the herring need to get over the dam in order to reach their spawning grounds. Plans for a fish ladder are in the works but, until then, the fish need our help! This two-day “Herring Brigade” was sponsored by the Medford Boat Club; dozens of volunteers from all over came to move the fish, in buckets, over the dam and into the Upper Mystic Lake. After hearing about it on the trusty Arlington List, we decided to join them. We are so glad we did! It was surprisingly relaxing to wait for a fish to swim into the net, pull it up, and start all over again.

But it was not as easy as you might think. Despite the large numbers of fish we could see easily, they are quite fast! Eventually, we staked our claim on a good fishing spot and our 5-year-old started hauling them in! When the bucket had a few fish in it, someone would carry it over to the dam, hook it on a rope and away it would go. There were about 20 people up on the dam, hauling buckets up and dumping the fish down a slide on the other side. Pete Luongo from the DCR kept a tally of the fish. The final numbers? Over the course of the two six-hour sessions, 19,358 fish were moved!

We plan to watch for this event every year and hope to make “fishing day” a new family tradition – and we hope that next year maybe some of our neighbors can join us!

...AND SOME TRANSITIONS

This is also a good time and place to announce some **Newsletter** transitions. Not much in this world stays exactly the same; we fit that category, too.

As we mentioned in our last issue, we have a spirited Newsletter team, of about a dozen or more neighbors. In terms of overall coordination, though, Steve Johnson (Jason Street), will be stepping up to help guide everyday **Newsletter** operations. Steve, who is also a professional photographer, has been active in the neighborhood and a contributor to the **Newsletter** for many years. Bill Berkowitz, who had been filling much of the coordination role, will continue to be involved as a team member and writer. One thing that won’t change is that Mary Cummings, our Editor, will work together with Steve, continue to do newsletter layout and design, and get print-ready copy to Arlington Swifty Printing, our crackerjack printing company.

There’s a transition on the distribution side as well. Dolores Schueler (Brunswick Road) will step down from her role as Distributor-in-Chief after 15 dedicated years of supervising the sorting of thousands of Newsletters, not to mention personally delivering them to the right people. Dolores now holds the undisputed Guinness Record for Most Newsletters Placed in Packets, Lifetime (close to 50,000 of them!); her commitment and spirit will be a hard act to follow. The good news is that Dolores will stay involved as a team member and occasional writer. (See her article in this issue.)

These transitions are healthy, we think; our new arrangements will bring fresh energy and vitality to what we are doing. We are confident that the near-term future of the **Newsletter** is in good hands. And with your continued participation and support, the long-run health of our **Newsletter**, and of our neighborhood, will be assured.

A closing P.S.: There’s plenty of room for any of you to get involved, as planning team member, writer, distributor, or in some other role. If you are interested, just drop a note to Steve (steveandddoina@comcast.net), or Mary (marynwill@comcast.net).



Don’t throw away those old photos and posters! Help us recycle them into a neighborhood portrait collage and picnic. Join us in the park at noon Saturday May 31st as we create a collaborative rendition made from all the prints or other flat art you don’t need anymore. The perfect break from spring cleaning—just bring the photos/prints/posters and something for the picnic. Here’s how it works: First we decide on the subject to be made, and sketch the rough outline on big poster boards. Next we cut up the paper art into small squares, and arrange them by color and brightness. Finally the squares are attached to the board, and we have a neighborhood work of art! A suitable place to display it is being sought, and it will be posted on the website. Contact Steve Johnson for more details (steveandddoina@comcast.net).



WINTER IN OUR CABINS

By Mary Cummings
(Jason Street)

Weathering winter in the neighborhood is described as a pleasure or a test of endurance depending on whom you ask. Age is certainly a factor when snow is involved and icy streets complicate all our lives but, overall, we seem able to make the best of the cold, dark season. Hill's Pond becomes an animated Currier and Ives scene every year but this year, the skating extended from the pond onto the paths with the Jason Street path being glacial from the first snow fall in December to today (2/21/08). I was glad to see some of it melting in the recent heavy rains until I noticed that it was melting into my basement!

I decided to ask neighbors how they deal with New England winters in hopes of finding inspiration to get me through till April. I emailed a survey of six questions to our Neighborhood Newsletter email list and share some of their responses with you.

1. How does winter affect your neighborhood social life? For example, do neighbors spend more time talking with or visiting other neighbors in winter because winter makes it easier to spend more time in the neighborhood? Or do they spend less time with neighbors, because they are outside less and don't see their neighbors around as much?

- Aside from skating, winter doesn't really present opportunity for social contact. I tend to hibernate, but I do spend quality time with my immediate neighbors while shoveling snow.
- While it's true that we see each other less (and come spring we greet each other like groundhogs at the first sight of sun) we also rely on each other more. The worse the weather gets, the more we learn to reach out. We share shovels, and snow blowers, and advice; we borrow eggs or cups of sugar. We share rides when cars won't start, water when the pipes freeze, and candles when the power goes. A big snow can feel like a giant camp-out.
- I spent those last two snow and ice-filled weeks of December in South Florida, so I'm not emotionally qualified to respond. Still, warm and sunny as it was, I would never trade it for this place, even in retirement. I like a little snow and ice in my life, just as I appreciate the warmth and sun of summer. What could make our winter a little better would be to get rid of the winter glacier that makes half of the Hill's Pond circumference un-walkable in winter.
- One neighbor had a spontaneous brunch party on a particularly snowy Sunday. It was fun and unexpected.

- Fewer interactions, overall, but still many. We have a shared snow thrower at the top of our street, and people have get-togethers to show vacation slides or whatever.
- We spend a lot of time outside playing and shoveling with neighbors in the winter. I am not sure if this is more or less time than we spend with them in other months.

2. Do you fight off periodic bouts of cabin fever? If so, how?

- I get outside every day, have lots of company and cook for whoever will visit me. I also teach everyday and that's a great way to stave off winter blues.
- We seem to use the weather as an excuse to get stuff done inside the house, go to the movies, and read.
- I get really down when the days are shorter and colder. Winter is a season of a constant runny nose, cold hands and feeling cooped up.
- A little walk usually does the trick.
- Yes, by getting outside and enjoying winter activities.

3. Do you love to be out in the cold, snow and ice? If so, why?

- A new snowfall is quite beautiful. Watching my dog romp in the snow or my daughter sledding at Robbins Hill Farm is the upside of the freezing temperatures.
- It's pretty for a few minutes, but then the romance fades, and the elements become at best a distraction, at worst a perilous obstruction.
- I love to cross country ski and the kids love to play in the snow - either building forts, having snowball fights, or sledding.
- I love the cold and snow, but NOT ice because it's dangerous. I find the cold invigorating.
- Yes, I enjoy alpine and cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing.
- Okay, I admit it; I love shoveling. Those well-earned muscle aches, that feel of civic heroism. Even at my advanced age I also enjoy sledding. Several of us here love snow-shoeing. And when the ice is clear, going to Menotomy Rocks is like going to a circus: all those skaters on the pond, and dogs, and parents with wagonloads of little ones, and thermoses of cocoa. What makes me gnash my teeth is trying to walk to the bus down unshoveled sidewalks, or climbing the snow banks on corners where there's no access from sidewalk to street.
- I'd rather watch it through a window. Shoveling and dealing with ice are bothersome for me.

4. Do you enjoy inside games or cozy hobbies? If so, what are they?

- We love to play board games together and often will spend a few hours doing that on a lazy Sunday.

- Movies, music, crossword puzzles, cooking.
- Jigsaw puzzles saved me from cabin madness in '78.
- Games like Pictionary and Taboo.
- Lots of indoor activities: Movies, reading, community theatre (AFD), music get-togethers, etc.
- We sing together; play Scrabble, Boggle, Apples-to-Apples; go contra-dancing; build fires in the fireplace, mull cider, and cook lots.
- I like to read, listen to music, sew, knit, cook and have company.

5. Do you contemplate retirement in warmer climates? If so, where and why?

- No, I think we will always live somewhere with the changing seasons.
- Constantly—Europe tops the list every time. Cote d'Azur, Riviera, Ibiza, Provence—anyplace near those beaches.
- Absolutely, perhaps Austin Texas. Better yet splitting the year between here and somewhere warmer.
- Never! Death first! We are die-hard new Englanders, with no taste for Southern heat, humidity, or age-based communities.
- Not warm, but warmer with no snow. We can't really shovel anymore.
- I'm retired now. Our friends are here. We're staying.

6. What could we all do to make winter in our neighborhood more pleasant for all?

- Everyone should get after the Selectmen, Town Manager, and DPW to demand that the practice of piling up the maximum possible amount of snow at corners be reversed. This anti-pedestrian policy was only implemented within the last four years or so.
- More aggressive clearing of sidewalks would help, both for safety and for encouraging people to get out to walk to the Center or whatever.
- Get outside and talk and laugh and help; then have a potluck lunch or dinner.
- Maybe a neighborhood game night?
- We could walk more often, drive less, wave at each other, and go caroling (or the equivalent) out of season. We could offer rides or library runs or errands to stores. We could hold igloo-building parties at the park.
- People should shovel their sidewalks, including and especially the mounds pushed up by driveway plowing.
- A hot cocoa stand at Robbins Hill Farm on sledding days.

- Organized outdoor activity such as snowman/castle competitions, or building a warming hut at the pond, with hot cocoa!

The Friends of Spy Pond flyer is in THIS issue! One extra day in February in this leap year and then the Lion leading to the Lamb. I can't wait to see you all playing outside again in just a few more weeks, and then we can celebrate making it through another New England winter together.



A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD GARDEN

By Karen Nichols (*Gray Street*)

Have you noticed the wonderful new garden at the corner of Endicott and Gray Streets? The town redesigned the intersection to slow traffic and make crossing safer. Instead of just planting grass, Susan Vik and Dan Sheehy (both of Gray Street) asked for and received the town's permission to plant flowers and ornamental bushes. Dan dug out rocks and old roots, and Susan put her horticultural talents (and hands) to work. Now we can all enjoy colorful foliage and blossoms through the seasons. Another beautiful spot in our neighborhood provided by one couple's initiative. Thank you, Susan and Dan!



CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to young artist Gabriella Hakim, of Jason Street and the Ottoson school, who received a Gold Key prize in the Boston Globe Scholastic Arts Awards. The Globe sponsored the state-wide competition in cooperation with the Massachusetts Art Education Association, and the winners were displayed in the Transportation Building Gallery in Boston throughout February. Gold Key winners (the highest award) now go to New York City, for national competition and a late spring exhibit during the National Awards Celebration.

Do you know someone who deserves recognition? Anyone graduating, being promoted, or making praiseworthy progress? Let us know so we can congratulate them this spring.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE REFERRAL LIST - UPDATED 2/28/08

This is an updated list of businesses that have provided good service to neighbors. We've maintained the list for about ten years adding referrals from satisfied neighbors and removing businesses about whom we receive reports of unsatisfactory services. Businesses cannot refer themselves.

Our new and diligent keeper of the list is Marianne Curren who can be reached at mgcxc@verizon.net or 646-4689. Please let us know if you can recommend a business.

Arborists

Arbor Care	648-1100
Boston Tree Preservation	729-0095
Matthew Foti	861-0505
MacDonald Tree Service	641-2600
Chuck Walton	861-2942

Cabinetry

House of Cabinets	
Deborah Bishop	275-8600

Carpenters

Nathan Murray	(617) 470-7856
John Sawyer	643-3536
Scott Robichaud Carpentry	(978) 658-6509
Denis Wogan	(617) 547-9229

Chimney Cleaning and Repair

Atlantic Chimney	986-4888
Four Seasons Chimney	297-7890

Computer Consultant

Greg Ruccio	648-0716
Mark Bildman	(617) 596-7545

Contractors

Greg Blass	646-0292
Bob Cargnel	(508) 667-2900
Rick Chadwick	646-9525
DJK General Contractors	643-9498
Feinmann Remodeling Inc.	643-6269
Heritage Home Improvement	(978) 988-9552
Out of the Woods Cabinetry and Carpentry	641-3332
Welch Design	(617) 350-5677

Dry Cleaner, Tailor

Stephano's Delux Fabriccare	646-6633
-----------------------------	----------

Electricians / Electrical Contractors

Caron Electric	(800) 440-9940
Keith Bryant	643-1292
Joe DeNatale	(617) 497-5531
Dermit Murphy	643-1677

Flooring & Floor Refinishing

Patrick Hunt	862-3559
Charles Miller	(508) 376-2893

Gardeners

Ferris Donham	648-7973
---------------	----------

Gutter Cleaners

AAA Sparkling	(617) 924-3653
American Gutters	(800) 322-1920

Heating and Air Conditioning

Burns Mechanical	899-2366
Custom Air Systems	899-1133

House Cleaners

Dilson and Grace Santos	(617) 782-8856
Tom's Hardwood Floors	(617) 472-1291
Choice Cleaning Services	(617) 787-2086

Interior Designers

AR Decorating	729-6639
Harron Hill Interiors	(978) 264-0624

Lawn Service / Landscaping

Mike Busa	(508) 875-3604
Jerry's Landscaping	643-6490

Lifting and Light Moving

Greg Pavao	646-9000
------------	----------

Masons

Ray Dalton	(508) 871-1535
Frank Sinopoli	(617) 965-1448

Painters

Joe Beninati	438-8807
Robert Ladanyi	(978) 525-3532
Jimmy Lazos	641-0867
Gus Moisakis	646-6045
Tibetan Painters	608-4269

Plasterers

Patrick Hourican	643-5941
------------------	----------

Plumbers

ABC Plumbing	641-3823
Button Plumbing	648-3064
Joe DeCampo	316-8182
Fran DeChristoforo	438-9339
Frank Formica	641-2022
E. Puopolo & Son Inc.	648-5239
Patrick Young and Son	(617) 489-4935

Roofers

Chris Nolan	(617) 923-9060
Shamrock Roofing	(617) 969-4423

Wallpaper Hangers

Greg Booth	(617) 473-0204
------------	----------------

Window Installers and Repairers

J.B. Sash & Door Co.	(617) 884-8940
----------------------	----------------

Windows, Siding and Roofing

Metropolitan Pressure Washing	(978) 663-5195
Northshore Window and Siding	(617) 628-7204



STEVE'S PEEVES (THE FIRST IN AN ENDLESS SERIES)

By Steve Johnson (*Jason Street*)

People who don't clean snow from the roof of their cars. Or those who don't clean more than a peephole from one window. Come on, you can do it. Everybody's in a hurry; think about safety and visibility! Legislation was introduced last year to require drivers to remove ice and snow from their vehicles before hitting the road, by State Rep. Cleon Turner of Dennis. A previous attempt by State Rep. Brian Knuuttila (Gardner) called for a fine of \$500 and up to six months in jail for failure to clean. Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and several provinces of Canada have all proposed similar measures to make driving a snow fort a punishable offense. Right now, it is a penalty of insurance liability (you spray, you pay). Hopefully the oversight will extend to truckers who don't cover their loads.

IT IS EASY BEING GREEN

By Steve Johnson (*Jason Street*)

I read a statistic analogy recently that created a dramatic image:

Enough office waste paper is thrown away each year to build a 12-foot wall between Los Angeles and New York City. Naturally, I envisioned our little corner of the US map, and wondered how our neighborhood fit into that picture. While we wait for spring to turn the natural world green, what's happening in our own community? Are we more or less "green" than our neighbors, and how do we compare to other cities and towns in the rest of the world? I wonder how efficient or wasteful we are as a society, and how much we give and take from the planet. I consider Arlington to be progressive, and we're in good company. One recent poll rated Boston the third greenest city in America, largely because of the efforts to promote bicycle travel, and the restoration of green space over the Big Dig. Cambridge, far ahead in bike travel, was ranked number six, and San Francisco number one. But what about the rest of us who can't seem to avoid using cars?

One measure of our presence is called a carbon footprint. It's a simplistic assessment of how one contributes carbon residue to the environment based on consumption of fossil fuel, or related by-products created using fossil fuels. Typically, these calculations are based on estimated household spending for utilities, appliances, travel, and locally produced food and goods, and are not very precise. Even so, the results

are telling: the US average is shamefully higher than the rest of the world at 20.4 tons per person, compared to 11 tons on average for those in "industrialized" nations. Maybe I'm cheap, but my number came in at 4.5, which is just above the entire world's average of 4. So, if we assume that three quarters of the roughly 42,000 people in Arlington are also commuters with similar habits to mine, then we as a community add 126,000 tons of carbon dioxide to our surroundings.

The ways to quantify our consumption habits are infinite; I could fill this issue with statistics and graphic illustrations of the waste stream. Of course there are many more factors to be considered; in fact everything we do, eat, create, or consume has some effect. So, to grasp just one tangible piece of the puzzle, let's consider the wastepaper trail. It travels from those blue bins at the curb to one of three processing centers in Massachusetts, to be transformed into cereal and cracker boxes, book covers, and game boards. Massachusetts was an early leader in the growing recycle/reuse service industry, and the more than three hundred participating programs recycle over 500,000 tons of material annually. Finally, what's good for business is also good for the environment!

Here are some more encouraging stats:

As of 2006, 53.4% of all the paper consumed in the U.S. (53.5 million tons!) was recovered for recycling, and the ratio is continually increasing.

86% of Americans have access to curbside or drop-off paper recycling programs.

One ton of recycled paper saves 3,700 pounds of lumber and 24,000 gallons of water.

One ton of recycled paper uses: 64% less energy, 50% less water, and creates 74% less air pollution and 5 times more jobs than one ton of paper products from virgin wood.

Enough with the numbers—what's really impressive is the progress made so far, and the potential for even greater success with widespread participation. It's really easy to adopt routines for a more responsible ecological lifestyle. Like getting into the habit of clicking into a seat belt, it doesn't require a big change. Cooperation and education are the keys. The day-to-day decisions by individual consumers and businesses on where to live and drive and shop are what will restore balance to our environment. In our own neighborhood, the list of common household items that can be recycled easily is extensive, and growing. Check the recycling flyer or the town website (listed below); there may be many things you didn't realize are retrievable. Here are some useful web links:

http://www.town.arlington.ma.us/Public_Documents/ArlingtonMA_DPW/index

<http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/dep/dephome.htm>

<http://www.state.ma.us/dep/recycle/consumer2.htm>

<http://www.state.ma.us/envir/eoea.htm>

<http://www.wastecap.org>

<http://www.massrecycle.org>

<http://earth911.org>





RE-ENTERING THE NEIGHBORHOOD AFTER RETIREMENT

By Virginia Gregory (*Norfolk Road*)

My husband and I moved to Norfolk Road in 1960 with two small children. Three more children were added in the next few years. Our turn-of-the-century Victorian house at 62 Norfolk Road was perfect for raising a large family, lots of nooks and crannies, places like “cubby-holes” in the attic eaves to hide and pretend. None of our neighbors had a pool for summer fun, but the lawn sprinkler provided endless hours of cool delight for the children. Later we joined the brand new Winchester Swim Club so that children would have swim lessons. Dot Stein and Pat Erickson often carpooled with me.

There were 42 children on the one block of Norfolk Road, and the mothers would let the children play at large. My husband and I owned the extra plot of land next to our house, and many of the Norfolk Road children would congregate there after school until I would decide to “suggest they go up the hill and play in the Meade’s, yard or the Linsky’s yard, or with the Bryants or Burtons.”

The children walked to the local grammar school, Parmenter School on Irving Street, and returned home for lunch. The big decision the children had to make in the morning was whether to walk “up hill” or “down hill.” It wasn’t until 1973 that school lunches were introduced. When that happened I found that the day was long, and I returned to work in a part-time capacity at Boston University (9:00-2:00, four days a week with the summers off). I would leave BU promptly at 2:00 p.m., drive my VW bus home and be there with an apron on to greet the children arriving from Parmenter School. That was in 1973, and most of us mothers were at home.

The “Murphy boys” lived on Norfolk Road. The Murphy boys were well into their 70s and had lived on Norfolk Road with their mother for their lifetime. Dan Murphy knew every tree on Norfolk Road and would share his knowledge. He would also tell tales of how he and friends rode the street car to Revere Beach in the summer.

When our three boys were old enough to cross the

street, they were encouraged to “go to the Boys Club” after school. Brud Faulkner would look after them as a father would, and we knew we could count on their safety. The girls were not as yet welcome in the Boys Club at that time, so they would join Brownies (with Jo Levin) or Campfire Girls (with Lee Brooks). Jane Howard was the “mother par excellence” who made grape jelly, showed the girls how to weave wool on her third floor loom, and taught them to be good citizens.

A big lifetime event was to get your own library card as soon as you were able to write your name. Trips to Robbins Children’s Library were frequent, and you would always find not only books to read, but friends as well.

Now that I’m retired, I’m finding the joy of remembering and reliving the same activities. I find that the sun still shines through the windows. The sight of the golden leaves giving a warm glow to the house brings back many memories. One of the treats I’m presently enjoying is watching the backyard birds feed at my feeder during the day. Another joy is seeing the mailman deliver the mail up and down Norfolk Road.

Before retiring, I would hurriedly ask a friend “How are you?” and not have time to listen because I’d be dashing off. It’s now a delicious treat to be able to spend some time listening and visiting over a cup of coffee. The sense of time is stretched out, time to browse in the library and the food store, instead of hurrying to get the articles on my list for supper. One of my biggest joys is to be available to my school-aged grandchildren, attending their daytime school activities – e.g., a concert, or assembly, or simply walking them to school.

Many things have changed (for the better) over the years. Menotomy Rocks Park was always special but even more so today. The park is a lovely place to take a mid-day walk and watch the changing wildlife. The park is the same but better. The trails are so improved. I remember when Bernice Jones organized the first Arlington Vita Trail through the hills. One would have to stop every 20 yards of so to do the prescribed bit of fitness challenge.

Arlington is so much the better these days. True, we have to remember to lock our doors, and our cars, but that’s a small bit of responsibility needed for safety. Many of the neighbors are still in the same houses and happy to stop and chat. A few friends have downsized and bought condos, but stayed in Arlington!

About twenty years ago, Deirdre Wadsworth, Sue Burton, and I decided to have regular suppers with the mothers of our children’s school pals (now all grown, married and living in their own neighborhoods). These are the mothers of children who attended the Parmenter School on Irving Street. We meet for supper at Shanghai Village every three to four months and share our lives.

When we first met some twenty years ago, we were all at similar stages in our lives. We would talk about college entrance requirements. Then later we shared news of our own outside work experiences. Then the time came when we'd talk of graduations, and marriages. That's when the photos would come out and be passed around the table. The grandchildren arrived and we had more pictures. Eventually talk became focused on our travels or taking classes ourselves. Resources were shared. Soon I noticed that one by one the mothers were retiring from work and into other activities.

It always amazes me that the list of those coming to the suppers grew and grew. We all have that one distinctive tie to the old Parmenter School. Our children are now on their own, living all over the United States and Europe. When the children visit, they ask about their old classmates and we have current news for them. They are amazed that all of the mothers they knew are still friends. If anyone reading this article wishes to be on the "call list" for the next Parmenter Mothers Supper please let Deirdre, Sue, or me know. All are welcome.



Be sure to check out the mystery photo contest on the website at www.jhitesnews.com. If you can identify the location of the photo, e-mail us from the link on the website. Winners' names and the answer will appear in the following issue.

LIFE IN OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS....

(SATURDAY NIGHT VERSION)

From *Goldenseal*, a magazine of West Virginia traditional life:

"Every Saturday afternoon, Ivan [at 90 years] packs his violin and banjo in his car and drives the half mile to Bowman Ridge Community Association Center. . . . He makes the coffee and sets the potluck table for the weekly 'Bowman Ridge Opry,' an open jam session of bluegrass, country, and traditional artists. . . .

"There's no cover charge for this gathering of friends, which gets under way by 7 p.m. and goes until 11 p.m. every Saturday, regardless of weather, crowd size, or lack of pickers. . . . Like the other musicians, he does it for the camaraderie and smiles. 'If you can get them people sitting back there grinning like a butcher's dog, you know you are doing something right.'"



FAREWELL AND THANKS!

By Dolores Schueler (*Brunswick Road*)

I plan to transition out of my role as a primary distributor of the **Neighborhood Newsletter**, but still plan to work for the Newsletter in some capacity. Fifteen years ago, when the **Neighborhood Newsletter** was just being reborn after a hiatus of a couple of years, I saw Nils Fonstad out delivering newsletters on my street and offered to help. He and Bill Berkowitz were taking on the entire delivery, so I offered to help revive a distribution network that had been in place in the Newsletter's first incarnation. Since then, the Newsletter has enjoyed great popularity, and finding help has generally not been a problem.

The neighbors who have helped me with distribution have been wonderful – some have been consistently distributing for 15 years. The following great group of people currently distributes the newsletter: Jim Bailey, Carol Band, Mimi Barbera, Gene Benson, Bill Berkowitz, Nan Bers, Jessie Brown, Colin Campbell, MaryAnna Foskett, Peggy Gardiner, Jo Hartel, Jane and Pete Howard, Carol Kalauskas, Margaret Kim, Leola Moss, Amelia Mueller, Elizabeth Neaman, Jan Pagliasotti, Lois Scribner, Marion Strauss, and Judy Weinberg. Also, a special thanks to Anne Tulimieri who worked as a lead distributor with me for a number of years..

The **Neighborhood Newsletter** is distributed to approximately 1340 homes in the area circumscribed by Spy Pond, Highland Avenue, Mass. Ave., and Route 2. I have organized a system of individual routes, and for each issue I reconfirm distributors for each route, count out newsletters into marked envelopes, and distribute them among our network. I am looking for someone to take over this job. Mary Cummings has been the lead person in the area from Jason Street west to Highland Ave. and I have been responsible for the area from Spy Pond to Jason Street. It might work best if two people volunteered to share the responsibility, so that Mary could focus on editing the Newsletter and getting it produced.

Overseeing the distribution of the Newsletter is an enjoyable experience. We have a loyal and dedicated group of distributors who make the organizing role a pleasure. If you are interested in stepping into this role, or would like to learn more about it, please contact me at my web address someschueler@yahoo.com or give me a call at 781-641-0832.



NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING MARKET

Judy Weinberg (*Venner Road*)

The downturn in the housing market has certainly been front and center in the media this past year. There is no denying that the mortgage crisis hit many homeowners, and the rapid increase in house prices in the past decade caused inflated prices that were just ripe for a correction. Why did this happen? A lot of this can be explained in two words: easy money.

It became a cycle of supply and demand. Banks were allowing a higher debt-to-income ratio when determining loan amounts, meaning the percentage of income going towards housing costs kept climbing. They were also becoming more lenient when examining credit history and down payment requirements. These relaxed loan restrictions brought more activity to the housing market: more renters were able to buy, buyers were stretching themselves to purchase more expensive properties, and homeowners were trading up to more expensive properties. As the demand exceeded supply, bidding wars on properties ensued, and prices climbed. Increased prices also meant increased equity, so substantial equity loans were being granted.

The obvious downside to easy mortgage money is that homeowners kept taking on more and more debt. What goes up, though, must come down, causing so many of the problems we've seen in the past two years.

We all know politics is local; real estate even more so. Arlington real estate sales have had a downturn in the past two years, but substantial increases for many years prior to that. To put it in perspective, consider the following chart:

	Average sale price <u>Jan '01 to Dec '05</u>	Average sale price <u>Jan '06 to Dec '07</u>
Single Families	27% increase	4.5% decrease
Condominiums	49% increase	8.5% decrease
Multi-families	21% increase	11% decrease

So then, if property values are dropping, why hasn't the assessed value from the town also dropped? These really are two different numbers that can be explained as follows:

An **assessment** is when the Town assesses your home's value in order to determine how much property tax you should pay. Most governmental agencies do home assessments every 2 to 4 years. In some instances, an assessor will visit the inside of your home to see if any improvements were made which may affect the home value. At other times, the value will be based solely on property sales records, age, condition, size and other factors.

An **appraisal** evaluates your house and determines an accurate value based on comparable sales that occurred in the previous 6 months. This is using much more current information to determine fair market value.

The following chart shows all real estate sales in our **Newsletter** neighborhood between October 3, 2007 and February 17, 2008:

Single-family homes

33 Academy Street	\$825,000
26 Bailey Road	\$650,000
20 Menotomy Rocks Drive	\$622,000
12 Newman Way	\$585,000
86 Pleasant Street	\$670,000
176 Pleasant Street	\$750,000
188 Pleasant Street	\$558,500
31 Wall Street	\$559,000
7 Woodland Street	\$730,000

Condominiums

79 Jason Street	\$450,000
105 Pleasant St, #2	\$475,500
114 Pleasant St, #201	\$229,500
125 Pleasant St, #306	\$280,000



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
Website: www.jhitesnews.com

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!