



The Neighborhood Newsletter

Volume 11 Number 3

The Sunshine Issue, May, 2004



STUFF AND NONSENSE

by Mary Cummings (*Jason Street*)

Discarding superfluous possessions makes many of us feel clean, free, and virtuous. For me, tossing is the real meat of cleaning, especially spring cleaning. I envy anyone who has a dumpster in their driveway. My husband Will, however, has severe disposeaphobia that really interferes with my passion for purging.

Will accumulates papers – newspapers, magazines, books, business papers, junk mail, etc. We could make and fill a fleet of papier-mâché dumpsters if Will were willing to part with his hoard. I do hold on to a few things, but in a more limited, refined number of categories. Hobby paraphernalia, for example, should be stored for use in retirement. Book disposal, though, is a moral and political dilemma. Bad guys burn books. How can I jettison them? I know many neighbors share my concern for the fate of books. Can you imagine how high a pile of the neighborhood's stored used books might be – to the moon?

Relocating and renovating seem to be the best motivators to start tossing for dedicated pack rats, but those are rare opportunities. What motivates you to cut the inventory? Are

you an eclectic collector, or do you specialize? Are you “holding on to” things for your grown children? Do you have an equitable balance of keepers and tossers in your household? If you could have your very own dumpster for a week, what would you chuck?

Bill Reed (Woodland Street) gets to pile his things until his wife, Ellen, says it's time to toss. She's so good at tossing that they hardly had anything to throw away when they packed to move here from DC a few years ago.

Carol Kalaskas (Kensington Park) is a keeper while her husband, Charley, is a purger who frequently “urges” Carol to dispose of at least some of her papers. “Things pile up,” admits Carol. She saves articles that interest her. She can't keep it all in her brain so she stores them in print. “It's like throwing part of my brain out.” Carol suffers from cumulative

sentimentalism. The opportunity to pass things on to others who might need them eases the separation pain to some extent. However, she also uses the “someone might need it some day” excuse to justify her stockpiling.

Donna is the hoarder in the Wren home on Hillsdale Avenue. She finds clothes the hardest to part with, especially her daughter's clothes. Donna stores her treasures in the basement and attic. She and her husband Chris “have to negotiate” when space gets tight. Donna anticipates another serious negotiation when they take some attic space for an air conditioning system.

Josh Martin and Rita Teusch (Churchill Avenue) seem to be in accord on the disposal issue. Josh said that if they don't use something in a year . . . maybe two years . . . it can be thrown. They just renovated their house and had a real dumpster in

. . . your stake in the neighborhood

...We've put this headline in lower-case, since we don't want to be intrusive about it...

But here's a reminder that the **Newsletter** as always relies upon your voluntary support; that's what keeps us coming your way. So if you haven't contributed in a year or more – or if you can be a valued first-timer – please consider making a contribution to support the **Newsletter** in an amount that is comfortable for you. Checks should be made payable to the Menotomy Rocks Neighborhood Association and sent to Bill Berkowitz at 12 Pelham Terrace.

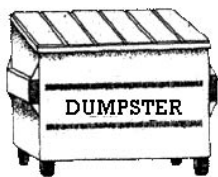
As before, your stories and story ideas for our next issue are always welcome – and we'd still like to encourage a few more people to come join our Newsletter planning group. Just let us know: our contact information is on the last page.

Many thanks – and happy spring!

their driveway for several weeks. Having the huge container inspired them to dispose.

Every few years Cliff Hakim and Amy Fardella (Jason Street) routinely give some clothes to Goodwill. It's uplifting to add some new looks! They are vigilant about recycling and think twice about purchasing new things guided by the notion: Less is more.

MaryAnna Foskett (Brantwood Road) will store things for her grown children until they have a place large enough to take on the baggage. The Fosketts don't have much storage room; no attic, just eaves and a basement. MaryAnna can't part with books, pottery, and plants, but everything else can go. Charlie Foskett, however, will go on a "rampage" of offloading periodically.



Since their grown children live on the West Coast, Winn and Richard Kramer (Brantwood Road) say it makes no sense to keep furniture and the like for them. They do, however, save things for the grandchildren they expect to have. Winn declared that she'd love to have a dumpster for a day, but she would have to get Richard out of the house.

Perhaps Winn and I can rent a dumpster for a day and send Will and Richard to a Red Sox game — at Yankee Stadium. Would you like to share our dumpster?

The Neighborhood Newsletter is produced through contributions from neighbors and the support of Print Aspects.



"CAN DO COUPLES:"
2 IN A SERIES

MARRIED TO THE COMMUNITY

by Helena Halperin (*Gray Street*)

Peter Howard stepped out of the Symmes meeting for two minutes. By the time he returned, his wife Jane had "volunteered him to ask a question," so Peter had the floor. This wasn't unusual, for Peter and Jane have been active in so many town affairs for so long, both separately and together, that they've practically become two legs of one biped.

The Howards, who were college sweethearts, have been married "forever." Their early years together were spent on naval bases, because Peter was in the Navy from 1959-1962. They lived at the Naval Ammunition Depot outside Goose Bay, South Carolina before integration. Jane was active in community projects such as blood drives on the base.

There Jane saw the appalling effects of segregation. She came to know the town's Black minister, who was a diabetic. Once he went into a diabetic coma, was taken to Charlestown's only hospital, and was left unattended in the hall for 13 hours. Another time she was in town shopping. Being very hungry, she went into a five and dime, hoping to eat at their lunch counter. She was startled to see that all the seats were gone from their pedestals, so she started to leave. The manager immediately brought out a seat for her; then she realized that this was the store's way to avoid integrating the lunch counter. This gave her an enduring passion for social justice, which led her to help establish the Arlington Human Rights Commission.

In 1962, the Howards came to Massachusetts so that Peter could do graduate work at MIT. While he was still in graduate school, he began working at Draper Labs, developing guidance systems as an aerospace engineer. (Yes, it actually IS rocket science.) Jane quickly got involved with the MIT Dames, a graduate student's wives social service organization.

Jane and Peter moved to Woodland Street in our neighborhood just before Halloween, 1964, soon after Peter finished his degree. They chose Arlington because it was affordable, had good schools, and because Peter could commute to Draper Labs by bicycle. He stayed at Draper for the remainder of his career and continued to commute by bicycle year-round.



Peter was first elected to Town Meeting about 28 years ago, though he's not quite sure when. In those years, Peter and Jane had to choose their community involvements on the basis of whether the other one had to be out that evening. Jane did not run for Town Meeting until the children were grown, when they could both go out on the same night. (They have four children: Douglas, Mary, Anne, and David.)

Peter has also been on the Finance Committee for 14 years, and was also a member of the original Recycling Committee. He's worried about salary disparities for town employees. The salaries of police, firefighters, and teachers are low; most town employees earn less than \$50,000. Peter commented, "We have a reasonable system of checks and balances between elected officials. In 1999, I participated in a study of other towns that had converted to a system of mostly appointed officials, often be-

cause of a scandal. That study found little evidence of improved efficiency.”

“There’s more turnover in town now. In the 70’s, homeowners lived here an average of 27 years. Now, it’s 10 years. Renters averaged 17 or 18 years then; now it’s 2 years. A high proportion of our taxes comes from residential property, not business. It’s hard to encourage building of new businesses, although we do have a new hotel. Many wanted the Symmes property to stay residential. Condos are not well received here. There are lots of open space advocates, but the value of open space is highly contested.”

“Arlington is one of the densest communities in Massachusetts,” Peter added, “denser even than some cities. Belmont is far less dense (only two-thirds as many people per square mile), and yet we sometimes compare ourselves to Belmont and other nearby communities, rather than those that have problems more like Arlington’s. Another problem is deferred maintenance. Town leaders don’t give it attention because there are always more urgent concerns.”

As co-chair of the Vision 2020 project, Jane sees the results of the annual survey that is sent with the Town census. “The survey now has a high response rate from every precinct. We’ve seen a great increase in frustration this year because of service cuts and rising costs, especially for schools, libraries, and public works. One consequence is that interest in Town Meeting is much greater. All the slots are filled now.

“Vision 2020 has also attracted a lot of interest. We’ve always had student involvement. When it began in 1992, 687 people signed up for the Education Task Force. One of our particular achievements is that now the Town bids and buys in Arlington.”

For Jane, both the process of civic involvement and the people she knows through it are rewarding. What Peter values is that here, one can build an approach to solving a problem and then monitor its success.

Many of us in the neighborhood know Jane and Peter. We see them everywhere, and hear their names in every discussion of town affairs. Interviewing them, it was great fun to find out about some of their other interests. When their sons were in scouts, Peter enjoyed being a cub scout leader. He makes delicious jelly (apple, quince, or grape) – a nice gift for friends and visitors. Despite Jane’s dedicated work on behalf of the town, she has fingers in many other pots as well. She’s actively involved in Voice of the Faithful, and several projects at MIT: a choral group, the Women’s League, and as chair of a medical lecture series.

Peter and Jane Howard most certainly model our neighborhood’s and Arlington’s impressive sense of community.



ROVING REPORTERS

by Jessie Brown and Ben Kuhn
(*Jason Street*)

For this issue, we asked people: “If you could put up a statue in the neighborhood of anything or anyone, what would it be?”

“I think we should have Jason Russell.” Jean Potter, Pleasant View Rd.

“Peg Spengler! She was a grand person and a leader in so many ways, in her work on the Planning Board and Redevelopment Board and as the first woman selectperson in Arlington. She was one of the biggest influences on neighborhood in the last half century.” Brian Rehrig, Academy St.

“A statue to represent spring: maybe some kind of fountain.” Kate Hannapel, Gray St.

“A famous basketball player.” Will Anway, age 11, Gray St.

“A hamster.” Eli Anway, age 6, Gray St.

“I’d go with Martha Washington. Lauren did a report on her, and we found her to be a tremendous role model for women and for all Americans.” Kelley Grealish-Kelly, Spring St.



“Lumiere! [from ‘Beauty and the Beast’]” Lillian Wilcox, age 4, Brantwood Rd.

“Neil Armstrong.” Aidan Wilcox, age 9, Brantwood Rd.

“A replica of the Great Spirit, by Cyrus Dallin.” Michael Smith, Lockeland Ave.

“My dog, Raleigh! He’s a coon hound.” Judy Weinberg, Venner Rd.

“How about a group statue of minutemen, with Jason Russell? Or we could go completely wild and use an Alexander Calder-type sculpture...” James Lee, Bailey Rd.

“A Redcoat!” Oliver and Emil Valdes, ages 7 and 13, Jason St.

“I’d say a merchant. A lot of people who used to live here were furniture makers, wool merchants, things like that.” Nyree Valdes, Jason St.

“I’d probably put up a chihuahua or something.” Sarah Vaillancourt, age 10, Kensington Rd.

“A toilet seat!” Tyler Vaillancourt, age 6, Kensington Rd.

“John F. Kennedy, because he inspired people to get involved in their government and their communities.” Laura Weiner, Jason St.

“Joe Thornton. He just symbolizes hockey.” Lindsay Mills, age 14, Monadnock Rd.

“Me!” Evan Mills, age 11, Monadnock Rd.

Do you have a favorite question for our intrepid Roving Reporters? Send it in to us; and if it turns out to be a favorite, it’s just possible that you might see it asked in our next issue.



A REUNION AND A CELEBRATION

by Joan Black (*Bartlett Avenue*)

You are invited to Menotomy Rocks Park on Saturday, June 12 from 2:00 till dusk to meet with former classmates, families, neighbors, and friends of my elementary school classes from 1970 until now. At this reunion, there will be activities for children, a food table, and perhaps live music. Bring memories, ample time for conversation, and something to share for the food table (if you wish to).

After 34 years of teaching grades K-6 in three different schools (Hardy, Parmenter, and Dallin) with a multitude of curriculum changes and an infinite number of fond memories and innovations, I will retire from service in public education in June, 2004.

Arlington has been my home all my life. My grandparents came here about 1915 and their family home is still owned by my brother. Two of my daughters have lived there. Four generations have called Arlington home, and I can always hope that another generation will have the opportunity to live here and contribute to the community.

Arlington Public Schools educated my mother, my brother, my children, and me. The quality education I received then inspired me to become the best educator I could. I have worked these many years while raising a family of four children to bring high standards to my classroom as well as enthusiasm for learning and the knowledge that one could make a difference by taking small steps.

The essential features of my classroom over the years were opportunities for children to enjoy and be responsible for their own learning. I encouraged them to be informed learners and to be both socially aware and active. My first lessons about ecology and environmental issues were in 1970; and over the years I have continued to teach about the delicate balance and interconnectedness of the natural world and the need for people to act in a responsible way and work for necessary changes. My classes have won awards in the New England Environmental Protection Agency Poster and Poetry contests countless times, and sponsored wildlife programs or humane education programs for the Dallin School. One of these programs was the Ambassador Wolf Program from Mission Wolf, a remarkable event.



I believe that education and compassion are the cornerstones for remarkable change. I know that children are our future and that they can and do make a difference. Our fragile world needs their help and vision. My retirement gift to the families of the town of Arlington will be to bring the Ambassador Wolf program from Mission Wolf back to Arlington. The event will take place in the evening of October 13, 2004 at a place to be determined in the community. There will also be an afternoon presentation for children at the Dallin School, where I presently teach.

Thank you to all of you who were either students or parents who entrusted me with your most precious gift, your children. I appreciated the opportunity to provide the best education program I could for each individual. My apologies (if no matter how well intentioned) the experience could have been better. I am asking anyone who wishes to celebrate my years of service in Arling-

ton to make a donation to Mission Wolf so that they continue their mission of education and responsibility. I will present them with all money collected when they come on October 13. Come by and drop it off if you wish, to say "hello" and see how silver my hair has become.

I have never been very good at saying "goodbye." But may some of these ideas be my legacy. And may the spirit of wild places and the joy only found in children's eyes be the memory you have of me. Love, Mrs. "Wolf" Black, alias Joan "Miss Kavanagh" Black.

We wish Joan many great days ahead, and look forward to honoring her and celebrating with her in June. Contributions to Mission Wolf in Joan's honor may be made in the form of checks payable to Mission Wolf, and brought to her at the park reunion on June 12 or sent to her at 46 Bartlett Ave., Arlington, MA 02476.



WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

96 Jason Street has been lit up by new neighbors. Paul Smyke and Angela DeVecchi moved here from Cambridge with their daughter Sophie (5 1/2) and son Ethan (13 months) as well as two cats and one goldfish. They haven't joined the ranks of dog owners but "certainly are feeling the pull!" Angela grew up in Belmont and Paul in Switzerland. She is presently employed as a full-time mom but plans to return to being a ceramic artist and ceramics teacher. Paul works at home as a consultant.

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT PLAYGROUND

by Cindy Starks (*Monadnock Road*)

As the weather allows us to venture out of our homes more and more, you may be in search of the perfect place to take your kids to play. It turns out that our town and even our immediate neighborhood are actually home to some great outdoor play spaces.



My kids (Ian – age 6, and Morgan – age 10) and I went out and rated some of our local playgrounds. They rated each playground on two categories (on a scale of 1-10, where “1” is “they don’t ever want to go back” and “10” is “they could play there every day”):

- Equipment - what kind of shape it was in and how interesting it was to each age group
- Open space – what else could be done besides playing on the installed equipment

I then rated each space on an additional two categories:

- Facilities – were there any public toilets, drinking fountains, trash cans, benches or picnic tables available
- Safety – how easy is it to keep track of the children you have brought and for them to be contained

In addition to our ratings, we give a little information following the table about each space. The playgrounds in the table below are listed in order of proximity to our neighborhood.

Arlington Children’s Center: The hard top basketball courts are also great for bikes and riding toys. Benches and walls are great for parents to relax on. No drinking fountains or toilets unless the school is open. The entire playground is fenced in and visible from almost anywhere else on the playground. Morgan: “It was a great place to learn how to ride my scooter.”

Menotomy Rocks Park: This wins for open space – you can play soccer, fly a kite, have a Frisbee game or hike in the woods. Benches and picnic tables are available throughout the park. The drinking fountain near the pond is nice and the only thing this park needs is a toilet so we can stop using the trees. It is easy to

wander off into the woods and the park is so big you cannot see every inch of it. There is no fence at the entrances, which makes it easy for little ones to escape. Cross country skiing (when we have snow) here is good.

Whittemore Robbins House and the park between the Robbins Library and the Town Hall: Lots of open space for tag, Frisbee, and other running games. My kids love to play hide and seek here. Although only minimal benches are available and no picnic tables, its proximity to the library where there are water fountains and public bathrooms is key. Minimal fencing and the expanse of the land make it hard to keep track of kids.

Spy Pond: There is an unlimited amount of open space around the pond, which is great for just about anything. Benches and picnic tables are plentiful, as are trashcans. Drinking fountains and public bathrooms are available at the Boys and Girls Club, when it is open. The entire playground is fenced in, although once you leave its confines, no fences keep little ones away from the water. There is a pathway that enables you to walk around the entire pond where there are lots of trees to climb and birds to watch.

Robbins Farm: Plenty of benches, picnic tables and trash cans, but no drinking fountains or public bathrooms unless the Brackett School is open across the street. With no fences to encompass the playground, it is very easy to get out to the street, but you can see most of the playground from anywhere on the playground. This is our favorite sledding spot in town. Morgan and Ian: “This is our favorite playground!”

Brackett School: No benches or picnic tables are available. Water fountains and toilets are only available when the school itself is open. Partially fenced in, it is harder to get to the street, but still possible. The entire playground is easily visible and the blacktop is great for riding toys.

Bishop School: Limited adult seating is available. Water fountains and bathrooms are only accessible if the

| Name and Location | Equipment | Open Space | Facilities | Safety |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------|
| Arlington Children's Center | 8 (Ian) 6 (Morgan) | 3 (Ian) 5 (Morgan) | 7 | 9 |
| Menotomy Rocks Park | 5 (Ian) 3 (Morgan) | 10 (Ian) 10 (Morgan) | 8 | 6 |
| Whittemore Robbins House | 3 (Ian) 2 (Morgan) | 7 (Ian) 5 (Morgan) | 9 | 6 |
| Spy Pond | 7 (Ian) 4 (Morgan) | 10 (Ian) 10 (Morgan) | 7 | 9 |
| Brackett School | 9 (Ian) 10 (Morgan) | 5 (Ian) 10 (Morgan) | 7 | 7 |
| Robbins Farm | 9 (Ian) 10 (Morgan) | 10 (Ian) 10 (Morgan) | 7 | 5 |
| Bishop School | 10 (Ian) 6 (Morgan) | 10 (Ian) 8 (Morgan) | 7 | 8 |

school is open. It is partially fenced in and completely visible. The field offers a huge expanse to play baseball, soccer and football all at the same time. In addition, the blacktop area and basketball courts are great for riding toys and other ball games.



Of course, if you are willing to travel outside our neighborhood, there are many more great places. If you have time, check out: Dallin School, Hardy School, Thompson school, Pierce School, Stratton School, the Reservoir, the Medford Street Playground, the playground behind the soccer field off of the bike path in East Arlington, ACA/Lesley Ellis, and the other Spy Pond playground in Kelwyn Manor, just to name a few.

MAKING ROOMS

by Mary Cummings (*Jason Street*)

A traditional look with contemporary technology is the motif that Helene and Bill Cates have created in their Lincoln Street home, with a dramatic renovation and three-story addition. Neighbor Gerry Gutierrez (Woodland Street) was the closely supervising architect, Barry Munroe the contractor, and Helene the decorator par excellence. Helene loves putting colors, textures, and furnishings together and certainly has a talent for it.

The Cates's have added about 12 feet to the back of their house on all three floors. At street level, the kitchen was renovated and enlarged and a family room added. Below that is a new office for Bill. The top floor is an enlarged master bedroom suite complete with French balcony. To fully appreciate the splendor of the addition, you should view the back of the house from Bartlett Avenue.

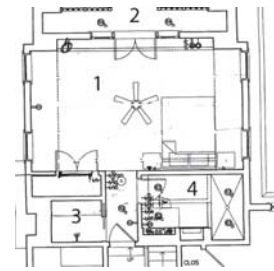


The floor plan above can give you an idea of the layout of the addition on the first floor. At the front of the house are the original dining and living rooms (1 and 2). The renovated and expanded kitchen is on the left (3), the family room at the back (4), and the mud room and bath to the left of the family room (5). Wrapping around the side of the house is a mahogany deck and stairs (6).

Mary Packard from Packard Kitchen in Burlington provided the luxurious maple kitchen cabinetry. Natural veins and imperviousness to heat were among the qualities that drew Helene to choose Vermont soap stone for the counters and subway tile for the back splash. The farmer's kitchen sink, something Helene has wanted for a very long time, came straight from England. Bill is the chef in the family so he got to choose the stove — a Wolf stove with six gas burners and a programmable electric oven — the ultimate traditional contemporary combination. Another traditional contemporary feature is a huge recessed refrigerator.

Both the newly painted living room and kitchen open into the bright, spacious family room. Floor-to-ceiling windows make the space seem enormous. The oak flooring of the family room matches the original living room flooring. Helene chose a sage green paint in the family room and a coordinated, lighter Guilford Green in the living room.

The third floor addition (see plan following) tops off the house with a bedroom suite (1) featuring a vaulted ceiling and spectacular French balcony (2). Here Bill and Helene can relax and enjoy their view of the city at night. The suite includes a laundry room (3) equipped with a Maytag Neptune towered washer-dryer unit and a bathroom (4) walled with fossil-filled limestone and topped off with skylights in the shower.



Take a walk around the block. View the front of the house, new driveway, and attractive mahogany deck from Lincoln Street and continue around to Bartlett Avenue where you can get a glimpse of the formidable, window-filled rear facade. Bill and Helene Cates have truly made a castle of their home and we wish them many happy years of comfortable living in it.



THE REAL ESTATE SCENE

by Judy Weinberg (*Venner Road*),
Broker with Coldwell Banker

Talk about confusing times! If you read the Boston Globe, it's hard to know what's going on with real estate these days. On April 18, they ran a story headlined "Bidding Wars? Paying less than list price is more likely." One week later, an article had the subheading "When the bidding gets intense, a letter can help." And just a few days after that, they wrote "Condo, home sales leap: Prices also jump amid rush to buy before rates rise."

And, speaking of mortgage rates, what are they these days? Well, they are on the rise, but they're still under 6% for a 30 year fixed rate. Will they keep climbing? Opinions are mixed on that as well. Pundits are saying they'll stay down at least until the election this November, whereas others are saying they'll

have to rise to keep inflation in check.

I'm sure you've seen For Sale signs sprouting up like daffodils. Arlington is still a hot town, and buyer interest (and prices) remains high. The spring market is truly in full bloom. There are always people on the fence, waiting for the prices to go down (if they're buying), or hoping they'll go up (if they're selling). Except for a few down years, a constant with Arlington real estate has been that it goes up.

The one other thing that has remained somewhat constant, though, for these past few years of real estate madness, is the rental market.

As interest rates have stayed low, it has become more attractive for renters to become owners. Because of this, there are more rental properties than there are tenants. Rental prices have gone down over the past few years, and landlords have become more flexible (e.g. allowing pets) and creative (e.g. offering the first month rent-free) to attract tenants.

Following is a chart showing sales in our neighborhood that have occurred in the past 6 months. These are only broker assisted sales, and do not show for-sale-by-owner transactions:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 38 Bartlett Ave. | \$825,000.00 |
| 29 Devereaux St. | \$638,500.00 |
| 29 Gray St. | \$934,000.00 |
| 307 Gray St. | \$622,000.00 |
| 123 High Haith Rd. | \$423,900.00 |
| 17 Hopkins Rd. | \$540,000.00 |
| 108 Irving St. | \$591,500.00 |
| 15 Jason Terrace (condo) | \$475,000.00 |
| 20 Menotomy Rocks Dr. | \$512,000.00 |
| 144 Pleasant St. | \$610,000.00 |
| 156 Pleasant St. | \$681,000.00 |
| 24 Pleasant View Rd. | \$584,000.00 |
| 24 Stony Brook Rd. | \$1,350,000.00 |
| 26 Temple St. | \$675,000.00 |
| 7 Temple St. (condo) | \$329,900.00 |
| 114 Wildwood Avenue | \$460,000.00 |
| 147 Wildwood Ave (condo) | \$282,500.00 |



POTTER'S GROVE: 150 YEARS LATER

by Helena Halperin (*Gray Street*)

Potter's Grove? I had seen the name, and vaguely knew it was "somewhere" in Arlington. Joseph Potter was a state senator, and the man responsible for changing the name of West Cambridge to Arlington in 1867. He was a great booster of the town, and bears much of the credit for its growth in the 1850's and 60's. His house still stands at 16 Maple Street.

Have you ever walked down Pelham Terrace? Despite living in the neighborhood 27 years, I hadn't. It's lovely, and at the end, on top of a steep hill, is a beautifully-restored Victorian house.

Academy Street has been my frequent walking street. Over the last ten or fifteen years, I have rejoiced to see careful restoration of the beautiful houses which screamed "neglect" when I moved to the neighborhood. As you walk down Academy Street, you may notice that there are also houses further back, off the street and not fully visible. One of these is the other side of the Pelham Terrace house.

That's where Potter's Grove was. Originally, it was a three-acre garden which came down to Academy Street. It was privately owned by Senator Potter, but open freely to the public. Potter wanted to bring people to Arlington, and did all he could to make Potter's Grove a well-known attraction. He planted rare trees, many of which stand today. He filled it with fountains, cascades,

waterfalls, paths, granite steps, bridges, and an observation tower for looking over the trees to Spy Pond. He encouraged photographers to publish photos of it.

Economic reality eventually doomed Potter's Grove. As a result of the Panic of 1873, Potter sold some of the land along Academy Street and what is now Pelham Terrace for house lots, but the garden continued to be public. Potter left Arlington in 1875, and sold the rest of the Grove. The new owner, an industrialist named Edward Hornblower, built a house on the top of the hill, but promised to leave the rest of the gardens intact, though he did not encourage the public to use them. In 1958, more lots were sold along Academy Street, and more houses were built. The remnants of Potter's Grove became a private garden, and gradually fell into neglect and disrepair.

In 1999, Andrew and Kristin McKee moved to Arlington, and participated in the restoration of the Lane-Hatfield House on Pleasant Street. Perhaps that whetted their appetites for restoration. They bought the Hornblower house between Pelham and Academy in 2001, and committed themselves to restoring it well, with full attention to period authenticity and 21st century convenience. One of the fountains, with a boy standing on a rock, holding a dove on his shoulder, has been restored and sits beside the house. They have moved the granite steps, and used them at the entrance to the house.

If beautiful gardens and well-restored Victorian houses make you drool, be sure you take a large handkerchief when you visit the McKees. The house is large, lovely, and comfortable. Every room looks out onto the garden, the remnant of Potter's Grove. Their daughter Hanna, a lively imp perfectly comfortable with strangers, and willing to show anyone her room and her dolls, has a view of the fountain from her windows. Now, the restoration is finished, and Arlington has been enriched by their efforts, just as it was enriched by the efforts of Senator Joseph Potter 150 years ago.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

by Glenn Koenig (*Hopkins Road*)

Is it possible to integrate electronic and other communications technologies so that they enhance rather than detract from the quality of neighborhood life?

To help us answer this question, we spoke with Glenn Koenig, one of the most tech-savvy and community-minded residents of our neighborhood. Glenn is the current President of Arlington Community Media, a new organization designed to improve public communication in Arlington through any and all means available. A long-time media access advocate in town, Glenn is also an independent video producer and a database consultant. His public talk on the future of technology will be given at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church on Thursday evening, May 20.

Glenn's ideas may stimulate some of your own thoughts on technology in our neighborhood. We hope so; we'd love to hear them; please let us know.

So, the question is: What media technologies could we use within our neighborhood to create a stronger sense of neighborhood among our residents?

To begin with, I define technology and media very broadly. Technology is not just electronic; media are not just mass media. Technology means the application of knowledge. Media means an avenue of communication. Looked at it that way, our neighborhood has a variety of choices. We don't have to be limited by the idea that some technologies aren't appropriate.

Some technologies have already been explored. For example, events at the park, all the way down to chance encounters by residents, when they are walking their dog, or out with kids. The advantages are that these are very old and well-established. And it means that anyone can get involved. These are low-tech. But one disadvantage is that these events are transient, and not recorded. It's hard for us to have a history of them. And since they involve face-to-face meetings, not everyone can participate. It's hard to have a

meeting that is not somewhat exclusionary.

If you want to concentrate on ways to connect that are as inclusive as possible, and that leave a record or a history, then you are looking at a different technology, such as the **Neighborhood Newsletter**. Or you could use the Internet, which is better suited for neighborhood organizing, since it can better target neighbors. Though this technology tilts things to younger and more tech-savvy people.

It really all starts with your goals. What do you want neighbors to know about themselves and the neighborhood? If you truly want to get people outside, have an ambulance drive up in front of someone's house nearby. Or have a major outdoor event, such as a snowstorm. In an emergency, you get your adrenaline going. If we had more of these events, we'd have a chance for some more community building.

But more realistically, you have a more difficult time in getting people to connect. There are only a percentage of people who will pay attention. They may be into other things. They may be overwhelmed. So again, you would start by asking neighbors what they want, and by asking how important are neighborhood affairs to them, compared to other things. In other words, how do these people want to connect? The content drives the structure, not vice versa.

For one example, I think it would be good to make a neighborhood movie, and get people together to watch it. I don't mean a feature-length movie, I mean 5-10 minutes. You would still need a script, and you would need a theme or story, and to think about how the neighborhood would see the movie.

But in the future, people will get more familiar with using digital cameras. And we are getting to a level where the average person will be more able to use sound and moving images. So it would be possible to record an event, and make it available to people not able to attend the event. I'm hesitant to push on this, since it takes time and effort to produce those images. But this could bring people together to talk to each other. There is potential for that, if it's done well.

Still, it goes back to content. What do people want and care about? You have to get a sense of what they want, or they won't come. The right thing doesn't have to be pushed. If you strike the right nerve, people will show up. But it's hard to know where and how to strike the nerve.

I see a change in the balance in how much we rely on technology, meaning electronic technology and automotive transport, and how our neighborhoods use face-to-face communication. List-servs and the Internet are still relatively new; it's a question of how to balance them with personal contact. But we are moving toward a time where people interested in electronic technology can use it as a bridge to develop more face-to-face communication.



Visit our own web page at www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org. Webmaster Ken Lubar is looking for calendar events and other announcements or anything else you would like to have posted for neighbors. He's always looking for additions to our Service Referral List as well.

E-mail Ken at Ken@lubar.net.

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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!