

## MEMORIES PAGE

### *Memories of "First Forester" Soothe The Soul*

By Patricia McGibbony-Mangum, former Forester living in Sierra Vista, Arizona

My parents, Cecil and Elsie McGibbony, were the original owners of the house at 4519 North Henderson Road, in Arlington Forest. It's the house to which I was brought home from Old Sibley Hospital in D.C., after my birth in May of 1946, and the house in which I and my brother were raised and lived until we moved to Vienna, Va., in 1964.

Mom and Dad were members of the first congregation at Arlington Forest Methodist Church. They were very involved in the church, and it's where I and my brother were baptized, attended Sunday School, and later, where I sang in the choir, was in MYF, and got married (Dr. Reynolds officiated) in September of 1966.

My earliest memory is of the day my brother was brought home, after being born in January of 1949.

My mind's eye can clearly see us in his tiny room at the end of the short hallway upstairs, as Dad laid him on the changing table to unwrap him. I remember pointing and asking, "What's on his feet?" when the footboard was revealed. Robert was born with club feet and would wear that board for over two years.

In later years, my brother and I stood in that room, on a stool in front of the little window to the backyard, and watched baby robins hatch and learn to fly. Dad had cut a board to place over the window, inside, and made a little door for us to open and watch the process without frightening the mother bird.

This was a time when people really got to know their neighbors. They had meals together, went places together, became true friends. My parents' group was made up of the Schotter's, the Eiserer's, the Edwards', and the Richter's. These five couples remained close friends until their lives ended. The only couple left today is the Eiserer's, who live in Silver Spring, Md.

After my maternal grandfather died in 1950, it was decided that my grandmother would sell their house in D.C., and live with us. Our side porch was torn down, and a room was built in its place. It was an open room that housed a sitting area, her work area (Gram was a clothes maker, who kept her clientele and worked until the day she died at 78 years of age), and her bed. The room had a large walk-in closet and a private bathroom, as well. I remember being excited the day she moved in, because I was going to get to sleep with her in the new room that night!

When I approached my teens, Dad built a rec room in the basement, so I would have a place to entertain my friends. These are the only additions to the original house that were made during our ownership, except for a larger stoop outside the back door.

There are so very many memories running through my head now. Perhaps the best way to express them is to just let them flow, freestyle: I remember ...

- when the pony man came to our street to take our pictures on our front lawn.
- hearing the glass milk bottles clinking together, as the milkman came up our walkway to leave our order in our milk box.
- watching all the ladies on our street rush outside when the truck came by, driver yelling, "Strawberries, strawwwwberries!" Same scenario when the knife sharpener came down the street!
- running up the street to the corner bus stop to jump in my Daddy-Boy's arms, when he arrived home from work each evening.
- collecting Locust shells off all our trees and making an "army" out of them.
- walking around the neighborhood on the stilts my dad made for me (I was a major tomboy).
- Mom putting us in layers and layers of winter clothing and sending us down to Lubber Run to go sledding. We thought those "hills" were mountains, and would play with all the other neighborhood kids until we couldn't stand the cold any longer. When we got home, hot-chocolate was waiting for us, and then mom would make grilled-cheese sandwiches and tomato soup. Afterwards, we put on two fresh layers of dry clothes, and went back down to the park to do it all over again.
- Kate Waller Barrett Elementary School. I am convinced that I can, to this day, accurately describe the interior of that school, as we knew it, in the 50's.
- watching the new recreation center being built. When it was completed, I was enrolled in a lot of activities there: square dancing, acrobatics, baton twirling (I later became a member of Mrs. Langlotz's drum majorettes group — The Arlingtonettes??), crafts classes, etc. My mother was a firm believer in "a busy child has less free time to get into trouble."
- our family walking around the neighborhood every Christmas Eve to see everyone's lights.
- exploring Culpepper's Woods. In those days, the only requirement to get into the property was to knock on the door of the house and get permission from Mrs. Culpepper. Always, somewhere along the way, we would run into Dr. Culpepper. He had on his well-worn denim overalls, a crooked hat on his head, and his feet were wrapped in newspaper and cardboard (he had Elephantiasis of the feet). The persistent legend of those days was that a little girl - about 12 - fell down a now-hidden well in Culpepper's Woods, and her bones were at the bottom. It was always our mission to find that well and return her bones to her parents!
- going to the swimming pool. My parents were among those who joined swim club as charter members while it was being built. I was a strong swimmer, having been taught to swim by my dad when I was a baby, but that high diving board was a challenge for me. I remember the day I finally was able to launch myself off it. It was the one and only time.

These and so many more memories will live in my heart and mind for the rest of

my life. I live in Arizona now, and each time I come back east for a visit, I make certain that I visit Arlington Forest, always taking a shortcut through The Pathway, and walking over to the shopping center, where I bought my wax lips, Pez, and fireballs at Jack's, and dove for Orange TruAde in the big cooler out front. Revisiting the past is sometimes very comforting to the soul.

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### *Sisters Return to Visit a Great Place to Grow Up*

*A few months ago, the Dorner sisters returned to their childhood home in Arlington Forest. They brought with them a flood of memories of Arlington Forest life at its very beginning; it was a great neighborhood then as it is now, filled with a few surprises. Marsha Lederman discovered Chris and Linda on the sidewalk outside her home on North Columbus and was fascinated by their stories. She asked that they share them with the rest of Arlington Forest. **Chris Dorner Clark** offers these reminiscences:*

It was so much fun standing in front of our former house on 113 N. Columbus Street and talking with Marsha Lederman. I will try to tell it like it was growing up there in the 40's and 50's, including stories of some of our famous/ interesting neighbors.

Our parents Edward and Helen Dorner bought the house in March 1941-probably for about \$5,000, maybe less! I was born the following November and lived there until I graduated from college, married and left.

My father died in 1979 and my mother now lives in assisted living in Columbia, Md. She is 97.

I attended Kate Waller Barrett School from 2nd through 6th grade. I was at Wakefield H.S. from 7th through 12th grade. We were the only class which attended for six years. Wakefield was in its first year when we entered.

I graduated from Mary Washington College in 1963 with a Bachelors Degree in French. I married Tom Clark in December 1962, lived in Bridgeport Conn. and Baden, Switzerland before settling in Canton, Mass. in 1966. I have two children, Paul and Katy, both married and living in Canton, and two grandsons 3years and 9 months old.

My first memories of living on Columbus St. were the war years and being out in the back yard with my mother working in her "victory garden." I also remember the air raid siren going off at night during the black outs and screaming with fright. Most of my memories start around 1946 when I was five. I will describe the

houses and who lived there.

Directly across the street were many interesting families. The first were the Hokes, German Jewish refugees. They were both physicians but could not get positions in the U.S. because of regulations, etc. They had two teenage children, Axel and Renee. I spent much time visiting there, and when they moved, they gave me a huge old wooden German student writing desk, as well as two German wooden string puppets which were a great source of fun in our family room — we called them recreation rooms — always in the basement — always wood paneled with knotty pine!

The next family who moved in — the summer of '48 — was the Hanburgers, Colonel Christian and his wife "Sis." Their son Chris became my good friend. He later became a famous linebacker for the Washington Redskins. Their daughter, Susan, was a good friend of my sister, Linda. Colonel Hanburger fought in the Korean War while living there, and later they had more children, Hank and Cindy Lou. The Hanburgers kept the house when leaving for their next assignment and another military family moved in, Air Force Colonel John (Jack) Hilger. Their daughter, Jeanie and I became fast friends and their younger daughter, Sally was a good friend of my sister Linda. Our mother always told us that Colonel Hilger flew in Jimmy Doolittle's raids over Tokyo. In researching him on the Internet, I learned he was second in command during these raids. The Hilgers moved after two years, and the Hanburgers returned for another year or two before eventually selling the house.

Two houses down from the Hanburger house and towards Arlington Boulevard was another famous family. It must have been in the late 40's as I remember - Army Col. Charles T. "Buck" Lanham was married with one young adult daughter who used to walk their dachshund on Columbus Street. Buck Lanham was a close friend of Ernest Hemingway. They had met at the end of the war at the time of the Battle of the Bulge. Hemingway was a war correspondent living and working out of Paris. I first read this in Mary Welsh Hemingway's autobiography, "How It Was," and then mentioned this to my mother who replied, "Oh, don't you remember when Hemingway visited the Lanhams? All of the neighbors were hanging out the windows gawking!" My mother told me he visited Buck Lanham to help Lanham with information on writing his memoirs. In searching the Internet, I found no mention of Lanham's memoirs. I have a special interest in Hemingway, as we have a condo in Naples, Fla., and my husband had a small airplane so we could fly to Key West in 50 minutes and visited Hemingway's home many times.

Next door to the Hanburgers, away from the Boulevard was another German family — Paul Brussler and his wife and daughter Hildegard. They had come prior to the war. Mr. Brussler had a fantastic garden in his back yard. It was on a series of ledges, all sloping down to the park. Every Christmas my father would take me to visit the Brusslers and have a glass of wine!

Now we must cross back to our side of the street and go in the opposite direction from our house toward the Lubber Run Park entrance, Three houses away from us were several interesting families. The first that I remember, again in the late 1940's, was another Army family, Colonel Rostow, his wife and three sons. Once a month, a large black limo with driver would pull up and an elderly dowager-type woman would come out completely dressed in black. She was there to visit her great-granddaughter, Mrs. Rostow. The dowager was (as the story goes and I can't document this) General Ulysses Grant's daughter!

The next family to live in this house was the Gordons, another Army colonel, his wife and Krista, their young daughter who was a German orphan. Several years ago, my mother gave me an article from a Washington newspaper in which Mrs. Gordon described how they found Krista and brought her home to the U.S. They also had an older son who was a concert pianist and I would knock on the door and ask to come in and listen to him practice.

Next door to us, living in Marsha Lederman's house, were the Battistellis, Pasquale and Mafalda. Marsha mentioned them as "the Italian family" and so Linda and I told her our very fond memories of them. They were like second parents to us. We were always welcome in their home along with any of the neighborhood kids we brought with us. They were known as Sia Wa Wa and Sio Pat. Sia meaning "aunt" in Italian, and sio "uncle." As a young child, I could not pronounce their names, thus the nick names.

He was an architect with the U.S. government and she was a home-maker. They had no children and must have loved our company. He was an artist and musician. Many of his paintings hung in their home, and it was filled with fine architectural detail, moldings, etc. He played the violin and mandolin. She was a superb cook and I can still see the home-made pasta hanging over strings drying in her kitchen. I remember being invited over for dinner and being full after the pasta course, but there was still more food coming! They also had a lovely garden in their back yard and I believe spurred my interest in plants and gardens. Some of my fondest memories are sitting on their screened side porch on the glider, drinking lemonade and talking to the Batistellis.

I have described certain families in detail. But there were so many interesting people living in Arlington Forest at that time. People came from many different places, and at a young age I was aware of different states, countries, backgrounds and religions. It was also a time when kids could roam the neighborhood freely and without fear. Lubber Run Park was a great place to play — you could sled down someone's back yard to the park — or picnic. We walked to school or rode our bikes — even rode our bikes home for lunch (my mother didn't like this very much).

Thanks for your interest. We had fun talking to Marsha, and I had fun writing this.

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## *Shopping Center Dreams and Debts Unpaid*

### *Grinning Back at Barrett*

#### *Batman*

By Former Forester Jim Banholzer

*Jim Banholzer lives in Idaho, where he has worked as a self-described "itinerant newspaper columnist." He grew up in Arlington Forest in the 60's, attending Barrett School for four years.*

In the hot summer of '66, while skidding my toy bike in front of Arlington Forest ESSO station, I received a flat tire. A man of about the age I am now, was picking up his reworked Chevy, saw my distressed look and kindly handed the shop owner a shiny Kennedy coin for quick patch of my tire.

Joyfully, I biked home to tell ma. She asked if I had thanked the nice man. I had not. So, I hastily pedaled back, shortcutting through the alley, on a mission to thank the kind sir. However, he had already left and sometimes I feel as though I've been trying to thank him ever since.

Last year I returned to the shopping center in a dream. I've done this on several occasions — both in reality and in dream — revisited this childhood Mecca of bubble gum thoughts, innocent laughter, and playful alley dogs and cats — sometimes with different scenarios playing out in my quest to find and repay that shining knight.

Most dreams match reality whereas everything has gone astray; the service station vanished, the wafting donut shop scents now replaced with a hair salon. The 7-11 has disappeared into thin air — with the chronic Cheech & Chong loiterers missing from its ancient facade. I touch the reflective glass of Walt's old place; where I sometimes received stylish flattop haircuts, and then given a *jar of goo*, with that photo of a heroic boy and his smiling astronaut haircut. It's all gone and no one's talking about it. These distinct images so powerful in my head, yet none of the passersby seem aware of this holographic presence from forty years ago.

The only unchanged icon from the past is the Lubber Run Amphitheatre, where our family sometimes watched magicians perform astounding

slight of hand magic tricks late into the twilight.

In the most recent dream, a new-wave mechanic shop of some sort reappears there. I gape at the shop activity with fascination, which causes a woman grinding down a modern automotive component, to come to a halt, as she steps outside to scowl at me, saying, "What the heck are you gawking at!" I slide into the shop to re-route her onto my aged '66 storyquest and about how I never find that elusive man. Then, I awaken to present-day Idaho reality.

The next morning is one of the first hot dog days of summer. The oppressive Ketchum heat is multiplying my numerous work demands into an overwhelming feeling, when suddenly a damsel in distress, calls to say she has run out of gas. I promise my help, figuring that if I skip lunch, I'll have about twenty minutes to spare. However, the gas station attendant and I notice that whoever last borrowed their container, has so far neglected to return it. The hardware store next-door stocks zero gas cans. Suddenly, my simple task of rescuing a fair maiden has transformed into a much larger test. Every car on the road seems to be taking extra eons, being too darn courteous to let the most lackadaisical of jaywalkers cross the road. I feel stupidly frustrated and try to dig in harder to figure out some way to untwist the crushing heated day into something better.

I hoof it up to always-reliable Chateau Drug Store. There to my sweet delight, I see two gas cans sitting atop the far wall. Grabbing both, I dash back to the gas station, fill one, and then donate the second can, so that the next person, who runs out of gas, won't have to face this same grinding aggravation. Even though this is kind Ketchum, the attendant is surprised and offers me a hot dog. I take a rain check.

Later, I mull over that old dream again. I feel that I'm a slow learner, at paying back random acts of kindness, but this time I finally got one right and figured a practical answer to the gnawing inside me about finding that impossible man.

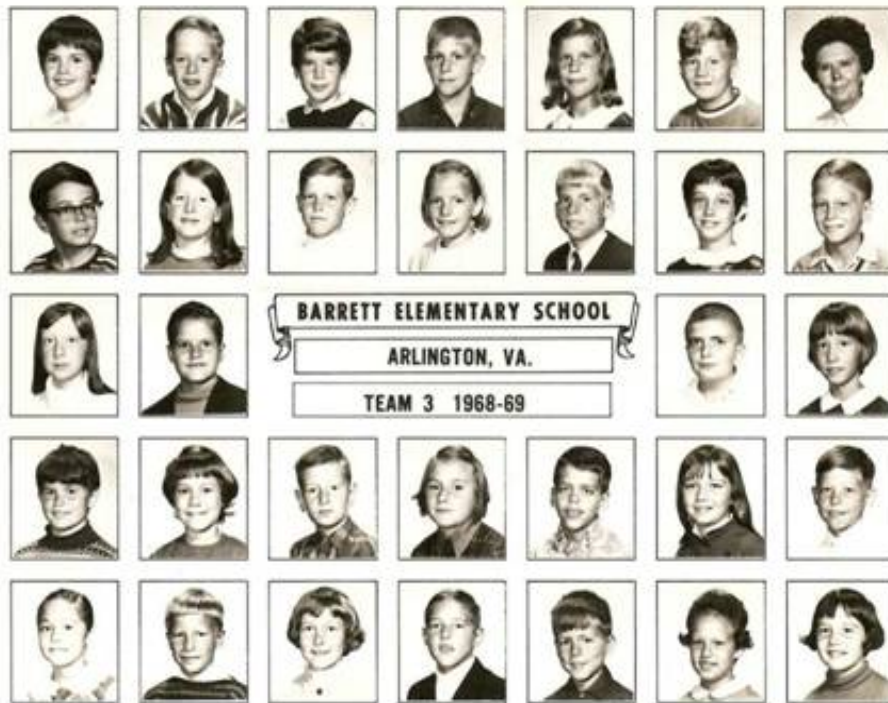
Indeed, it feels as though I've finally paid some of the karma allotted to me back to the service station dream world deities, by probing deep to imagine what kind magic leveling act needed performing to patch things up.

I wonder what scenario I'll skid onto whenever I re-dream about

Arlington Forest Shopping Center.

Next time I pass through the old neighborhood, maybe I'll paste this story to the reflective outer glass of whatever accepting store window, happens to be there for passerby to contemplate. Perhaps a man much like the one, who originally rescued me from the oppressive summer heat forty years ago, will gain something out of a reflect like this.

§§  
*Grinning Back at Barrett*



I'm the guy at the bottom center — with the dark suit and white turtleneck.

I attended Barrett Elementary from 1965-69, until we moved to Fairfax. I still have fond memories of Barrett and the surrounding neighborhood. I recollect learning how to read on that dazzling first day of first grade — how it all started flowing through me in a miraculous manner. Barrett started a cutting-edge NASA program for us children in 1967 or '68.

You can see by the class photo that we were called *Team 3*, as we were



no longer termed with *grades*. Students were permitted to work at their own comfortable paces and this program worked well. I remember excelling with math, science and creative writing. It was an exciting time; the Apollo space program had just begun, and we were aiming for the moon. I see from Barrett's website that the school is once again connected with a NASA program.

I disremember if it was 1st or 2nd grade; but at one point, there were two sisters at Barrett who both were instructors. Incredibly, the taller sister's name was Mrs. Tall and the shorter sister was Mrs. Lowe! We kids got a good giggle out of this, since it struck us as very Lewis-Carrollian. Back then, Tetherball was quite popular as was jungle gym and playing kickball with red rubber balls. Some of us children would chant the popular-at-the-time Red Rubber Ball song by The Cyrkle as we played in our splendid replete. Twice we had running races, which encircled the whole school. The teacher said that whoever won the race would get their name pasted into Barrett's permanent archives. *I wonder if that truly was the case?*

One evening after school at Barrett, we were playing some baseball. The team I was on was called the Evening Optimist. I hit a hardball blooper into far right-center field and tried sprinting for a triple. After rounding second and trying to slide into third, I collided hard with the shortstop receiving the relay. I was knocked unconscious and both teams rushed over to help revive me. I'll never forget dad standing there shaking me with encouragement, saying, "Son, you've just gotten the wind knocked out of you!" The only thing my young mind could fathom was, "If that's only getting the wind knocked out of you, then what does really getting hurt feel like?"

The one week we didn't have gym class in my four years at Barrett, was when the gym teacher set up a black and white TV on one of those roll-around stands in the cafeteria to let us watch the World Series played between Detroit and St. Louis.

Sometimes for PTA meetings, we kids would perform acrobatic acts, including climbing ropes to the tippy-top ceiling of the gym as fast as we could to impress the parents with our super strength. It seems rather dangerous now, looking back. Nonetheless, I'm glad that Barrett did have a rigorous athletic program. Now I hear that children at many schools have limited recesses. That to me seems deleterious to children's

developmental skills. I hope that this is not the case at Barrett today.

Another sunny day, a folk singer came into school to entertain us. All of the classes sat transfixed by the quality of his songs in the cafeteria, which doubled as an auditorium. I thought perhaps the singer was Pete Seeger and wondered if anyone else out there remembered the captivating folksinger.

Barrett also had a stamp-collecting club. Two kind elderly gentlemen came in biweekly and told us kids about everything we might want to know about the meaning of stamps. Then they would give us a bunch of old stamps for us to happily press into our scrapbooks.

As one of Barrett's ancient alumni, I cherish those reminiscent days and am appreciative for the great jump-start the progressive instructors gave me for a long and remarkable life.

## §§ *Batman*

I always admired dad for the choices he made buying houses adjacent to wilderness areas. The house he purchased in the mid-sixties at **140 North Columbus Street**, affording us young rascals rich opportunities to run around in the woods and sprout up without "nature deficit disorder."

Our Arlington Forest home stood next to one of the paved paths that funneled down into the park. It was the perfect intersection for us to set up a lemonade stand on sweltering Saturday afternoons. Sometimes, as we rascalions barked out fruit juice availability, we would receive cherished mercury dimes for the fare. And sometimes our lemonade profits became as elusive as quicksilver as my brother; David would promptly spend them on Italian Ices from the Popsicle truck.

During this era, Batman was one of our favorite shows on TV. One sunny afternoon, I dressed up in my yard as a caped crusader in my miniature Batman Costume. Wandering over to the park entrance, I noticed that some "bad teenagers" had furled up the metal "No Parking" signs, so that they were illegible. With all the tremendous strength my six-year-old body could muster, I tried unfurling the bent signs, so that the good

Arlington Forest citizenry could again follow the posted law. But it was to no avail.

Just then, a police car screeched to a halt in front of our house. Although I was in the right, I became nervous, ran and hid behind a rock in my own front yard.

The policemen shouted, "Hey you!"  
I emerged from the rock with a meek, "Who me?"  
"Yes, what are you doing damaging that sign?"  
I started to whimper, explained that I was fixing it and added, "I'm Batman. I'm a good guy!"

The officers politely laughed, saw that it was a misunderstanding, thanked me for trying to mend the sign and drove off in the dust to fight some larger crimes.

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***We welcome memories of early Arlington Foresters at all times!  
We promise to publish them in The Forester, on the web site.  
To save them for future historians.***