

The Bannockburn Newsletter

Since May of 1953 the Bannockburn Newsletter has been published monthly (except July and August) by the Bannockburn Civic Association (BCA) and financed by its membership dues. It was called the Bannockburn Civic Association Newsletter until 1974, when it became the Bannockburn Newsletter. Prior to May 1953 a community newsletter was produced singlehandedly by Naomi Wood, who began this useful project in the spring of 1952 at the request of Ivan Asay, then president of Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI). From the first BCA issue to the present (except for 1959 when she lived in California) Naomi has faithfully contributed her lively column, successively titled The Colyum, The Column, The Editor's Say So (during her 3 years as editor), Personals, and, finally, From a Personal Point of View. (Pearl Stewart ably filled the gap in 1959.)

Editors following Naomi were: Irene Jaworski (1953-56); Anita Gamson (1956-57); Gladys Hirsch (1957-59); Sandy Rovner (1959-60); Anne Janney (1960-63); Naomi Wood (1963-66); Marianne Ross (1967-69), who also wrote an editorial column Byline; Meris Karst (1970), who also wrote a column Editor's Notebook; Cyma Heffter (1970); Helen Lichtenstein (1970-73), assisted by associate editor Ruth Darmstadter (1972); and Nancy Schmitt (1973-78).

Twenty typists have worked on the newsletter, initially as volunteers. In 1968 the job became a paying one. It also took a lot of footpower to distribute the newsletter. Various groups of neighborhood boys and girls, most often Brownies, were organized for this necessary task by a series of 23 adult coordinators. In 1968 teenagers were hired to collate and distribute the newsletter. Payment for this important service has resulted in gratifying promptness in meeting publication deadlines. (See Appendix VII for more names of people who worked on the newsletter.)

The appearance of the newsletter has been intimately bound up with the method of reproduction. During the first 3 years the newsletter was stenciled and mimeographed and carried a simple line drawing of the front of the clubhouse created by Grace Gorlitz and laboriously stenciled each month by the editor.

In 1956 Arthur Leib, aware of the relatively new offset process, took the newsletter copy to the Columbia Reporting Company in Washington. When he returned to pick up the printed sheets, he was pleasantly surprised to be informed that no charge would be made for this minimal job. From 1956 to 1971 Arthur Leib, then Herbert Raskin, and then Joseph Maltz faithfully delivered the copy and brought back the printed sheets to be collated by various Bannockburners. Despite sporadic attempts by our loyal couriers to pay for printing the newsletters, no bill for services rendered could be pried from our benefactor. BCA, uneasy about this unusual situation, kept a reserve newsletter fund in its treasury for several years. Finally, in 1971, the bubble burst when someone at the printing company decided that "this sort of work was not really part of our regular business."

With the use of offset printing came a more detailed and handsomer drawing of the front of the clubhouse, again provided by Grace Gorlitz, together with all sorts of adornments supplied by editors and contributors. In 1962 Doris Lewis, another of our neighborhood artists, created a drawing of the rear of the clubhouse, featuring the newly spruced-up grillroom.

In 1971, when BCA was suddenly faced with having to pay for the printing of the newsletter, it reverted for about a year to the less glamorous mimeographed form, curtailing the length of the publication and dropping the masthead and artwork. Then came the return to offset in 1972 and the introduction in 1974 of the current masthead with its attractive lettering and tree design created by Terry McCaffrey of Fairway Hills and reproduced by Hoagy Young. In recent years either the typist or the editor has delivered the copy to printers in Bethesda.

Browsing through a quarter-century of newsletters leaves us with two strong impressions: Bannockburn has always had lots of people participating in lots of activities, and the newsletter has been an indispensable medium of communication, both promoting and reporting these activities.

Among the many features that have appeared in the newsletter over the years, four seem to be the most regular and durable: the Calendar, Naomi Wood's column, Civic Association News, and Community Club News.

Readers of "From a Personal Point of View" are familiar with the wide range of interesting and useful items contained in Naomi's much-appreciated column: the comings and goings of people, births, deaths, honors, services wanted or offered, items for sale, etc., etc. Especially popular are the listings of houses for sale or rent and neighbors' recommendations of reliable commercial establishments and skilled craftsmen, such as carpenters, plumbers, electricians, etc. The latter information first appeared in 1974 as a "Good Finds" column.

Reports on civic association matters, such as elections, membership and executive board meetings, and official actions taken on behalf of the community, as well as information on county matters directly affecting Bannockburn, have been provided at various times by the editors or by BCA's presidents and other officers. Of special interest have been William Green's informative land-use articles, which have appeared regularly since 1960.

At first (December 1955) news about the Bannockburn Community Club appeared in an unsigned bulletin attached to the newsletter. In the fall of 1957 Victoria Olds began contributing a regular column on club activities, and was followed by 14 other contributors. (See Appendix VII for names.) These articles have kept us informed about the Bannockburn Show, the Halloween Picnic, the Newcomers' Party, and many other community activities in addition to the results of elections and summaries of club meetings.

During the long period when low expenses permitted 8-page issues, the newsletter contained more features than during more austere periods. Among such bygone features were reports on the local unit of the League of Women Voters, the local Women's Democratic Club, the Montgomery County Civic

Federation, the day camp, and speakers who addressed meetings at the clubhouse. Nursery School and PTA news was also reported. (See Appendix VII for names.)

One long-running feature of special interest to the community was "Meet Your Neighbor," a series of biographical sketches of Bannockburn residents, initiated by Pearl Stewart in 1958 and carried on by Winnie Bengelsdorf, Dorothy Pocinki, and Anne Janney, ending in 1966. During the 1950's Herbert Schwartz conducted a gardening column. David Karro started a Teen Talk column in 1957, which was continued by nine other columnists, ending in 1968. Activities of the junior high set were reported for a while in Junior Jabber, starting in 1964. (See Appendix VII for names.)

For several years Sandy Rovner produced lively New Year's Greetings in the manner of the New Yorker's Frank Sullivan, ingeniously working residents' names into her rhymes. Winnie Bengelsdorf commented frequently on community and suburban life in her own sparkling brand of terse verse.

There were travel notes, letters from abroad, lists of available teenage babysitters, and news of the Teen Center, the tennis club, dance groups, art groups, and Scouts. Dan Hamers reported regularly for a long time on the swimming meets held at the Bannockburn pool, a seasonal feature that continues today, anonymously.

Even though high costs presently keep the maximum length of the newsletter to four pages, it continues to be an indispensable element of our community life.

Irene Jaworski and Nancy Schmitt

International Relations

Seymour Wolfbein, then president of the Bannockburn Civic Association, visited Bannockburn, Scotland on June 24, 1957, fortuitously on the anniversary of the famous battle, and presented the district council, convened in his honor, with a scroll bearing greetings from our community. The council later sent reciprocal greetings. In the summer of 1961 our community received a permanent invitation to visit Bannockburn, Scotland, and A. K. Davidson, Convenor of the Sterling County Council of Bannockburn, Scotland, who was in Washington for the World Council of Local Governments, addressed a number of Bannockburners at the Wolfbein home. His talk was taped by Hyman Bookbinder.

The Bannockburn Directory

One of the unifying links in the community since 1956 has been the Bannockburn community directory. Published by the civic association, it lists the names and phone numbers of community residents. It appears now at 3-year intervals but used to be issued every 1 or 2 years; the 1976 edition with its 323 listings was the 10th edition.

The idea of a community telephone directory had surfaced several times in the early days of Bannockburn. As new residents moved in, there was always too long a period before their names appeared in the metropolitan telephone directory. Phone numbers changed frequently in those days; at first only four-party lines were available, then two-party lines, and finally, as the O'Leary 5-digit exchange replaced the original 4-digit Wisconsin numbers, private lines became available for most residents.

As the community grew and more activities were organized, the need for a directory became more urgent. When the Civic association agreed to sponsor its publication, I accepted the assignment of editor and secured the help of numerous block captains. A listing of all addresses was compiled, block by block, and a card file established. Gradually the names were filled in on the address cards, and finally the cards were rearranged in alphabetical order. Morris Welling prepared an up-to-date map of the community, complete with house numbers at the ends of each block, an indication of the school site, and a dotted line showing where Bannockburn Drive would eventually continue beyond the upper East Halbert intersection. The first directory was distributed free of charge to each house in the community sometime in 1956.

Since the first issue the directory has gone through nine editions. Its publication dates were sometimes dependent on finding someone to tackle the job, sometimes dependent on the Civic association's dues collection schedule. Each of the editors remembers vividly the headaches involved in tracking down house numbers in an ever-growing community, determining the boundaries, checking spellings, and frequently finding out, just as the final page was typed and proofread, that a new family with a name beginning with "B" had just moved in. There were also the delicate questions as to whether to omit the name of a recently separated spouse or include the name of a daughter (no longer a child) who had not lived in Bannockburn for years but whose parents couldn't bear to have her unlisted.

As clearly as can be determined, the following people have edited one or more of the 10 directories: Anne Janney, Nancy Schmitt, Gloria MacGillivray, Virginia Richardson, Helen Hirsch, and Betty Wagman. Morris Welling updated the map periodically until 1970, when Doris Lewis prepared a new one, showing the area extending from MacArthur Boulevard to River Road and from Wilson Lane to Goldsboro Road. Then in 1976 Anne Janney and Gloria MacGillivray painstakingly compiled a complete site map of the community, showing every house with the name and address of its current owner or resident.

The first directory had 139 listings, all but five of which were of married couples. In 1976 there were 323 listings (including some nonresidents), of which 80 percent represented married couples. Of the 139 families listed in 1956, 74 were still living in Bannockburn 20 years later: 16 on the two blocks of Braeburn Place, 14 on Wilson Lane, 14 on East Halbert Road, 8 on lower Bannockburn Drive, and 22 elsewhere in the community.

The 1961 directory, the fourth to be published, for the first time included a listing of each child's name and year of birth. By 1965 the listing of community organizations was added as an aid to newcomers. Then the 1976 directory added "The Bannockburn Story," by Mary and Jack Herling, an introduction to the history of the community.

One of the characters in an old Bannockburn spring show once brandished a dog-eared, tied-together-with-string, almost-in-shreds copy of a community directory, and the audience chuckled in sympathy. They knew how important their own dog-eared, tied-together-with-string, almost-in-shreds copies of the directory were to them. They knew how invaluable the directory was in keeping Bannockburn a cohesive and active community.

Betty Wagman

Bannockburn Mythology

Every third person in Bannockburn has heard the story, most more than once. It was told to me on four different occasions, by four different people, each time with great pride.

Larry Wagman, they said, was taking a sociology course at Brandeis, with the professor talking about the loss of community. "How many of you know your next-door neighbors?" asked the prof, to demonstrate his point. When about half the class raised hands, he added, "How many of you know everyone on your block?" Only two hands were left. "Do either of you know more people in your community than those on your own block?" and then only Larry's hand remained up. The professor looked at Larry with wonder, then quietly asked, "Do you by any chance live in Bannockburn?"

Well, that's the story. Does it warm your soul? It was after the third time I had heard this story that I asked Don Wagman, "Is it true?" "No," said Don. "It never happened." "Where did the story originate?" I asked. "I don't know," he answered.

But never mind, Don, and never mind, all you others who have told and retold the story in one form or another. It may not be true, but it has truth. It has truth because we want to believe it, and we love it, and we surely know it COULD have happened. That is the stuff of which mythology is made.

Luba Dreyer

Bannockburn Community Club, Inc.

As the first families moved into Bannockburn, the board of Bannockburn Co-operators, Inc. (BCI) continued to focus its energies on the development of the remainder of its property. But many of the residents were less concerned with the problems of building costs, lack of capital, water lines, etc. than they were with the quality of life in the community. Their cooperative efforts had built houses; now they were ready to work cooperatively to build a community.

In 1952 there were about 90 families living in Bannockburn. BCI had established a committee on community activities and facilities, chaired by Ivan Asay. Naomi Wood had started a newsletter, and five issues had been circulated to residents. The nursery school was beginning its second year, and two folk dances, in June and October, had raised more than \$100 to be used for the maintenance of the clubhouse and community grounds. Shrubs were planted at the Bannockburn Drive entrance, and a tractor was rented to mow the valley. Brownies, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and the Arts Co-op were in full swing.

Responses to a questionnaire circulated to residents indicated strong interest in working together on clubhouse and grounds maintenance, planning a swimming pool and tennis courts, and developing a variety of social arts and crafts activities for adults and children.

By 1953 a separate account was set up for funds to maintain the clubhouse and sponsor community activities. Some residents made voluntary contributions of \$2.00 per month for these purposes. Starting in the spring of 1953 with the formation of the Bannockburn Civic Association (BCA), community activities were sponsored by a joint BCI-BCA entertainment and recreation committee.

As the community entered a period of new growth, a dilemma arose regarding community activities and the clubhouse. Many of the new families moving in were not members of BCI. Although some had been drawn to Bannockburn by its reputation as a cooperative community, they had no desire to become members of the co-op and share its financial woes. On the other hand many members of the co-op did not, and never would, live in Bannockburn and consequently had no interest in investing money to save the clubhouse or in working to develop community activities.

It was clear that BCI was not the organization to perform these functions. Neither could the Bannockburn Civic Association assume these responsibilities: its function was to represent the community before governmental and civic bodies on such matters as zoning, roads, schools, etc. Thus it became clear that a new organization was needed. And in 1955 the Bannockburn Community Club (BCC) was born.

The October 29, 1955 "Invitation to All Families in the General Area of Bannockburn" described the purpose of the Bannockburn Community Club, which was being started under the sponsorship of the BCI board and with the cooperation of BCA. The club was being formed to:

A. Develop an expanded program of recreational, social, and educational activities desired by the members and not currently supplied by existing organizations in the neighborhood, and

B. Operate the Bannockburn Clubhouse and grounds as an increasingly useful and effective Community Center. This will involve covering necessary operating and maintenance costs and assuring continued operation during the current year. It will also include long-run planning and initial steps to make the Clubhouse and grounds more attractive and suitable for meeting community needs.

Membership was open to all adults residing on the Bannockburn golf course tract and in "immediately adjacent areas" and to BCI members, wherever they lived.

Residents greeted formation of the new club with enthusiasm. In what was to become a familiar pattern in the community, block captains were selected to collect the initial \$5.00 dues for the first half-year. By the beginning of December 100 families had joined, and the first general membership meeting was held on January 18, 1956.

Ed. Note: The following persons were elected as a steering committee: Herbert Blackman, Robert Branstead, Melvin Bret-houwer, Stacey Brooks, Milton Chase, Esther Delaplaine, Raymond Jacobson, Jacob Karro, Donald Landay, Roger Nelson, Mary-Ellen Oppenheimer, Herbert Raskin, Jerry Zeisel. The first president was Raymond Jacobson. Stacey Brooks was named chairman of the activities committee and Milton Chase chaired the facilities committee. (For list of BCC officers see Appendix V.)

The club entered into a lease with BCI for use of the clubhouse. An annual rental was established, roughly equivalent to what BCI was paying in real estate taxes for the clubhouse, the community property surrounding the clubhouse, and the creek valley strip. (As a nonprofit social and recreational entity, the community club itself was tax-exempt.)

The club took over from BCA the responsibility for the annual Halloween picnic and initiated a fall party and dance. From the co-op it took responsibility for rental and maintenance of the clubhouse. The main tenant was the nursery school. Users who charged for services -- such as dancing teachers -- were charged rent, but nonprofit groups, such as Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and teenage groups were given free use of the building.

One of the club's first tasks was to survey the clubhouse building to determine what maintenance and repair work should have priority. Improved lighting, repainting the ballroom, and replacing the grillroom's termite-ridden pillars were among the first projects to be undertaken. Meanwhile the activities committee organized a puppet show, set up a ping pong table, and began to lay plans for a summer day camp to be operated by the Y.M.C.A. A gardening group was launched, as well as a twice-monthly bridge group. Discounts were obtained from area stores. A rental schedule was established for use of clubhouse rooms by members and non-members. The first club bulletin was sent out in December 1955. BCC was under way.

By the spring of 1957 membership had risen to 133 families: 124 out of the 162 houses in the BCI subdivision, and 9 from outside the immediate area. At this time the dues were \$10.00 a year, collected semiannually.

The dues were never sufficient to meet all the clubhouse expenses. In April 1957, emulating the successful nursery school party held in January, BCC held its first big fundraiser: a gala party-dance, complete with songs and skits -- April in Paris. (See "The Bannockburn Spring Show.")

Ed. Note: The club was incorporated on May 7, 1958 by Raymond Jacobson, Herbert Raskin, and Donald Landay, to "provide for the community of Bannockburn and neighboring areas a community center for cultural, educational, and civic activities..." and to "lease or own and to operate a building and grounds for the accomplishment of these purposes...." In addition to the incorporators, the board of directors included Alex Bilanow, Milton Brooke, Israel Cohen, Victoria Olds, Madeleine Sigel, and Jerry Zeisel.

Meanwhile BCI, which still owned the clubhouse, was a relatively dormant organization with a membership that partly overlapped that of BCC, which managed the clubhouse as part of its responsibilities. It was therefore decided by members of both entities that steps would be taken to enlarge the membership of BCI by making arrangements for BCC members to become BCI stockholders, thus retaining a separate legal structure for each organization but making their membership largely identical. (There were, and are, BCI stockholders who have never joined BCC because they either lived elsewhere or were not interested in supporting community activities.)

Accordingly, at BCI's November 25, 1957 annual membership meeting, the co-op members amended BCI's bylaws, changing the stock ownership requirement from 205 shares to one share and opening membership to family-members residing on the golf club tract who "paid for or showed proof of ownership of "one share of BCI stock at the par value of \$1.00 per share." (At a special meeting on May 24, 1967 the members amended the bylaws to extend the boundaries to include family-members "residing within two miles of the outer limits" of the golf club tract. (See map on page 24.)

In the 1962-63 dues solicitation bulletin, BCC members were invited to apply \$1.00 of their \$10.00 club dues to the purchase of a share of stock in BCI. By October 1964 approximately 180 new members were admitted to BCI through this procedure.

Ed. Note: Another significant change in the co-op's bylaws (and in its charter) was made at the annual BCI membership meeting in November 1964. Since it was at least 8 years since the co-op had engaged in any real estate transactions, it seemed fitting to amend the bylaws and charter to reflect its true nature. Article II of the bylaws was accordingly amended to read:

Section I -- Purpose. The purpose of the Co-op is to promote the moral, spiritual, intellectual and physical well being of all persons in the community by providing and maintaining buildings and surrounding land with rooms and facilities for nursery schools, lectures, day camps, religious, cultural and physical instruction -- all on a non-profit basis.

One reason for this change was the desire of BCI to obtain tax-exempt status, application for which had been denied earlier that year on the grounds that although BCC operated the clubhouse as a nonprofit enterprise, the actual owner (BCI) was essentially a real-estate development corporation. On the basis of the amended bylaws and charter, a new request for tax exemption was submitted to the county in 1965. This also was turned down, but on appeal to the Montgomery County Court of Appeals BCI's position was upheld. The county then filed an appeal with the Maryland State Tax Court in Baltimore. However, when the hearing was held, the county withdrew its appeal, and the exemption was granted by default. (This exemption remained in effect until 1976 when the tax was reimposed.)

In 1967 another step was taken to bring BCC and BCI closer together: starting in May the two organizations operated under identical boards. On November 13, 1967 BCI met to hold its annual meeting -- a brief one; then BCC held its annual meeting -- also brief; then the two groups met jointly for the first time. Ever since, the annual meetings have been held jointly and both organizations have had identical boards. Official stationery now carries both names. (For list of BCC-BCI officers see Appendix VI.)

At the annual meeting in October 1971 the BCC-BCI membership authorized the installation of a badly needed new roof for the clubhouse and raised the annual dues to \$15.00 to pay for this large expense.

The community club's activities continue in the pattern established in the early years: raising funds for maintenance of the building and bringing the community together in social, educational, and recreational activities. Thanks go to all those who, over the years, have served on the BCI-BCC board of directors, clubhouse maintenance crews, and special event committees; and to those who have, in one way or another, participated in the various activities which have taken place at the clubhouse. These activities have enriched our lives and nourished Bannockburn's community spirit.

Herbert Raskin and Betty Wagman

The Clubhouse

Part I. Before We Got Here

When I undertook responsibility in the summer of 1957 for establishing a third nursery schoolroom next to the grillroom of the clubhouse, I first checked into the soundness and safety of the wooden part of the building. In the course of this investigation I acquired some interesting information about the old and "new" parts of the clubhouse.

The old wooden building had been damaged by termites, dry rot, and a grease fire, which had burned out the kitchens at the west end of the first floor before Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI) purchased the golf course in 1946, but the county authorities found the first floor safe for nursery school use.

According to the fire marshal, who seemed to be familiar with the construction of the building from its beginnings, the wooden building is of hollow wall "balloon" construction and was built around 1912. (His estimate tallies well with the tax records pointing to 1914. See "The Bannockburn Golf Club.") It was set on a concrete slab on top of the hill without a basement, insulation, or sewer connections. Initially the only provision for heat was two back-to-back fireplaces, with coal or wood burning stoves added later. One fireplace mantel is still visible in the grillroom.

The oblong building, with its quaint casement windows, hip roof, brick chimneys, and slate shingles to the ground in front, faced south toward the Potomac River. The main entrance was in the middle. The wide central entrance hall had a fireplace in the right-hand wall. An archway led to the bar and grill (now the grillroom). An open stairway (now enclosed) with a balustrade led up to the center hall on the second floor between the main dining room and the two guestrooms (or manager's quarters ?) on the west side. There was also a small office or storage room on the north side, which now serves as the BCI archives file room. Double glass doors and screen doors (still there) gave access from the dining room to a large, railed roof area, which was probably used for summer dining, affording an excellent view across the Potomac. (There were electrical outlets for table lights at regular intervals in the rail posts.) The kitchens were located at the west end of the first floor.

The newer part of the clubhouse was erected around 1924, with a stone facade, high sweeping roofs, tall chimneys, a tower, and multiple French glass doors with semicircular windows above them. It faced south toward the Potomac and consisted of three parts: a large center section flanked by almost equally large east and west wings. The main entrance to the center section from a circular drive across the terraced front lawn led directly into the large room known to us as the "ballroom," with the staircase and fireplace so familiar to us today. There was an octagonal reception room with a smaller fireplace and handsome dark woodwork in the tower to the left of the ballroom. A large, attractive multiwindowed dining room (which became the first nursery schoolroom) could be entered from the ballroom, the reception room, or the long screened

porch which runs the length of the west wing. The new dining room was served by the kitchen in the older building by way of a passageway and double doors no longer in existence.

The east wing, with windows high up on the wall and its own entrance, was the women's locker room (the second nursery schoolroom). Next to it were a shower room and vanity-equipped lavatory. The center section of the second floor of the 1924 building, containing guest rooms and a lounge with a fireplace, was converted to an apartment. The second floor above the west wing (now a storage area for the apartment) was built with dormer windows along both sides and plumbing connections for additional guest rooms and a lavatory, if needed. The sunny space above the east wing, which may have been used as a lounge, offices, or meeting room, is now rented out to several artists as a studio.

The basement under the west wing was originally the men's locker room. Under the central portion of the ballroom are a well-equipped workshop and a laundry room. The gas-fired furnace which now heats the clubhouse is in the boiler room, under the east end of the ballroom. The present furnace replaced the original wood or coal burning furnace imported from Germany, which was later converted to oil and still heated the clubhouse spasmodically when BCI acquired the building.

Dimitri Boria of Barr Road in Fairway Hills, who played the golf course as a guest in the late twenties, has told Anne Rippey of the delicious dinners served at the clubhouse and the lovely formal gardens surrounding it. There are still two gnarled and skilfully stunted umbrella trees and two peonies marking the location of the central flower beds on the front lawn. But the ornamental cherry tree in front of the dining room, the flowering apple tree behind it, the hedge which rimmed the top lawn terrace, and the central stone steps to the lawn below (all there in the fifties) are now gone. So are the lush green vines which covered the east wing of the stone building until we realized they were poison ivy of a size and vigor we had never seen before.

A narrow drive, lined on both sides with Chinese elms, provided the only entrance to the golf course when BCI acquired the tract. The drive wound its way from the present intersection of Bannockburn Drive and MacArthur Boulevard past picnic grounds at the bottom of the hill, tennis courts, a parking terrace above them, up to the circular front drive, continuing around the east side of the clubhouse to the back.

The old clubhouse drive, which was to become a pedestrian walkway to the clubhouse from West Halbert Road according to the plat plans which had been filed, continued to be used as a road until 1955, when the present driveway and parking area at the back of the clubhouse were paved.

When the first Bannockburn residents arrived, they found that, along with the advantages of a community center, they had also assumed, willy-nilly, the care of an aging and somewhat dilapidated country club building. The BCI board had to cope with the repairs, alterations, and redecorations needed to make part of the clubhouse suitable for rental to the nursery school, the second-floor guest accommodations fit for rental as an apartment, and the ballroom and other available space attractive for community use and outside rental and income-producing activities.

Clare Belman

Ed. Note: Not the least of their concerns centered on the care and upkeep of an antiquated heating system in a virtually uninsulated building. Staggered by unexpected maintenance and heating expenses, BCI's board of directors, as early as the summer of 1950, considered the possibility of selling the clubhouse to a private school. A little later, attempts were made to interest the county in taking the structure over for a community center. Fortunately, at least from the viewpoint of the splendid uses to which the clubhouse has been put since, these attempts failed.

Part II. It's Our Baby Now

What would life be like in Bannockburn without this clubhouse constantly demanding our T.L.C.? The building has been a source of comfort, confusion, cohesiveness, and conflict. While most of us acknowledge the value of having a community center right in our midst, we must admit that on occasion the activities held in it and around it have been disturbing to adjacent residents. Some of the activities at the clubhouse are purely money-making ones, some purely social, others delightfully both.

Over the years our beloved clubhouse has been sustained by income from Bannockburn Community Club (BCC) dues and the rental of the apartment, the artists' studio, and the nursery school space. Lesser amounts have come from dance and fitness groups, builders' offices (during the construction period), college fraternity dances, New Year's Eve parties held by a Washington folk-dance group, and arts and crafts sales. The outstanding fun-and-profit activities are the Bannockburn folk dance group, the fairly recent yard sales, and the longstanding pride and joy of Bannockburn: the spring shows.

The Herlings rented the apartment on the second floor from about 1950 until they moved to their new house on East Halbert Road about 5 years later. The next tenants were the Eliasbergs and then the Rosenthals. In 1959 our first resident caretaker family (the Fletchers) moved into the apartment. In 1963 they were replaced by the Smeltzers, Bill and Beatrice, who continue to keep the clubhouse and its grounds in as good shape as time, money, and strength permit.

To give a clearer idea of where the money comes from and how it is spent, here are figures for expenditures and income for the fiscal year ending August 31, 1977, supplied by Clare Belman. Expenditures totaled almost \$12,000, of which \$9,000 was spent on basic operating costs (including \$4,700 for utilities), taxes (\$1,700), insurance, and administrative expenses. Minor repairs and painting of the ballroom cost \$1,150.

Mighty efforts increased the income to over \$12,000, or \$1,500 more than the year before. The major components were: \$3,600 from BCC annual dues, \$4,100 from rents (nursery school, \$1,755; artists' studio, \$1,275), nearly \$1,100 from ballroom and grillroom rentals, \$1,200 net from the spring show, and \$1,000 from the yard sale held jointly with the nursery school.

The age of the clubhouse has made it vulnerable to all the troubles that can beset an old building, from termites to plain deterioration resulting from inadequate maintenance over a prolonged period. Somehow, over the years, ways have been found to accomplish most of the really essential work. From the start of the co-op nursery school, for example, participating parents have volunteered to clean, repair, and paint the nursery schoolrooms and playground equipment, as needed each summer before school begins. During May and June of 1953, 50 families volunteered to do a major cleanup and paint job. In October of the same year four male volunteers accomplished some much needed road repair work. Between 1953 and 1957, through the ingenuity and concerted efforts of a group of community residents, a great variety of necessary maintenance jobs were undertaken and completed. In 1960 several trees that had been planted close to the clubhouse had to be removed to eliminate dangerous drainage problems and damage to the roof. Gutters, downspouts, and roof shingles were either replaced or repaired at the same time. In 1964 the oil-burning furnace gave way to a new gas-fired unit. The ballroom got a new floor, lights, and a complete painting. The grillroom got a full ceiling overhaul, new lights, a floor; an outside trash bin was built, as well as a roof shelter for the doors facing the parking lot. Between 1964 and 1977 the interior areas were painted several times, electrical improvements made (some at the behest of the fire marshal to maintain the nursery school license), and some loudspeakers were mounted in the ballroom, partly as a result of the use of that area as the theater for the spring show. In 1966-1967 the parking area was tripled in size and completely resurfaced.

Troublesome roof problems kept recurring throughout these years, and finally, about 1967-1968, a major roofing job was done on the 1924 building. In the summer of 1976 a significant amount of long neglected exterior maintenance work was done, for the most part by several young adult members of the community under the excellent supervision of Michael Springer. These persons had been through the cooperative nursery school, Scouts, tumbling, and other activities under the clubhouse roof. Although they were paid for their work, they exhibited an attitude of really caring for the place that had provided them with so many enjoyable experiences in their childhood that could not help but enhance the quality of their work on the old place. Their work involved a lot of window repairs that started with carpentry and went the entire gamut through glazing and painting.

Ed. Note: In 1976 BCC asked a private consulting firm to inspect the clubhouse and make recommendations. Its detailed report stated that the building is extremely well-built and in surprisingly good condition. The report did, however, specify a number of repairs and maintenance projects that were needed, such as exterior painting, insulation, and several items in the grillroom. Estimated cost of essential repairs ranged from \$11,000 to \$17,000.

Where do we go from here? Our community needs are changing, but the building maintenance requirements remain. We have again become subject to an annual tax of \$1,700 from which we had been exempted for several years. In the past, residents of the community have responded with untold hours of voluntary labor to demonstrate their desire to have the clubhouse remain the focal point of community activities. Without these voluntary efforts it would be in even

greater need of renovation than it is today. Presumably the same ingenuity, talents, and energy will emerge again as they have each year: to write, produce, and participate in shows; to gather merchandise for yard sales; to muster volunteers for do-it-yourself jobs; to dream up and generate enthusiasm for new projects and do all of this because this is what we want and need, namely, to have the kind of community relationships that make Bannockburn what it is. It is this human social concern in us all that has brought forth these efforts in the past, and that is the spirit we are counting on for the future.

Israel Cohen

Mary Herling Saves the Clubhouse

One late summer evening while the Herlings were living in the apartment at the clubhouse, the steak Mary was broiling for dinner caught fire. As the smoke rose from the broiler, Mary, with great presence of mind, quickly hurled the flaming steak out of the open kitchen window.

The burning steak set fire to the tall dry grass which had been left standing around the edge of the lawn. The long hose and ladder trucks had only a short run from the fire house in Glen Echo, and they arrived quickly, even though one started to go straight up Bannockburn Drive and the other up East Halbert Road, and both had to back down and be redirected up the narrow paved lane leading from the lower part of West Halbert Road to the clubhouse. (This was before the present driveway was built.) As the cars of the volunteer firemen and fire buffs who had been alerted by the blasting siren came careening off MacArthur Boulevard, they too went off in all directions and had to be redirected. All the neighbors within earshot of the commotion went trotting up the hill to find out what was happening.

Although the neighbors wanted to help, the firemen herded most of the amateur volunteers aside for their own safety while they cheerfully worked at putting out the smoldering grass fire. After it was out, the firemen stayed a while to make sure it didn't start up again and told stories about the bigger and better brush fires they had put out that day. Mary, a bit shaken but relieved that little damage had been done, good-humoredly kept repeating the story about throwing the steak out the window as people asked her how the fire had started.

After everything was safe and the excitement was over, the fire trucks were maneuvered back down the lane, and the neighbors began drifting away. As they made their way home, people had fun arguing, tongue in cheek, about whether it would have been better if Mary had let the clubhouse burn down so we could build a new one that wouldn't cost so much to heat and had a furnace that didn't keep breaking down.

Clare Belman

The Spring Show

The Bannockburn Spring Show, sponsored by the community club, is an annual event that has become one of the most enduring special customs of the community. Originally there was a spring dance at the clubhouse, and it became traditional to create some skits and songs for the "entertainment." Gradually the skits and songs became the focus of the event. For marking the point where the shift became established, 1957 is usually considered the first "real" show.

The shows each year feature the work of so many people that a complete list of participants would run over a thousand names (with many repetitions). Most shows involve about 50 or more community residents (with a few from nearby areas) -- the 1971 show We Just Live Here involved over 70. I found that it was necessary in reviewing the shows to omit almost all reference to the members of the casts. Yet they were the stuff of which these shows were made.

Each year a large group of Bannockburners are struck with an infectious disease known as Show Biz. And, while in its grip, they will labor and rehearse and take orders from others (not easy for Bannockburners) only for the pure pleasure of being part of the show. But there is a great creative surge that everyone connected with these shows senses during the last two weeks of rehearsal. Then, as this creative force reaches its peak at the performance, it fully redeems the effort expended. As one regular cast member has put it, "It's cheaper and better than therapy."

In the chronicle that follows I may have omitted someone's special remembrance of "that show." These brief descriptions of the shows from 1957 to 1977 were as I and a few old hands remember them. It must be acknowledged that the enduring success of these shows is due to the enthusiasm of so many of our friends and neighbors to join in the effort as writers, singers, actors, dancers, light crews, choreographers, stagehands, set designers, musicians, costume designers, prop makers, makeup artists, producers, and directors at least once each spring.

1957 April in Paris. This revue was planned to be in keeping with the community club dance theme of a Beaux Arts Ball. The show featured a line of can-can dancers, which became a popular feature of many subsequent shows. Alfred Reifman and Eugene Confrey are credited as the prime movers in organizing and presenting this first show.

1958 Caribbean Carnival. Rosalind Raskin is credited as being the organizing force behind this show. Once again there seemed to be no formal plot or script; the emphasis was on Latin American songs and dances. The most vivid recollection of this event is of Boscha Bookbinder as a spectacularly successful M.C. who kept everyone in stitches. Sandy Rovner and Arthur Stambler were the principal lyricists.

1959 A Minor Orbit. Some show historians place this show as the first. Written by Irene Schneiderman with lyrics by Sandy Rovner, it began the era of more organized and scripted shows. This was the first of four shows directed by

Lucy Brightman. In 1959 she also was coproducer with Louis Schwartz, music director, stage manager, etc. A hardy perennial of Bannockburn shows, "the carpool number" made its first recorded appearance that year.

1960 Election Year Follies. This was the first of many shows authored by Betsy and Alex Bilanow. Norma Berkeley joined Lucy Brightman in putting it together. It is remembered chiefly for an outstanding, big convention scene. This was a great year for the fiercely partisan Bannockburn Democratic majority. In the midst of the upbeat fever, a group of loyal primary losers sang a dirge in memory of their hero Adlai Stevenson.

1961 The New Frontee-ah. Directed by Lucy Brightman, this satirical piece by the Bilanows is remembered as a tremendous success. More than any other show, this one is remembered for the magic Nancy Karro performed with makeup as she transformed the cast into the glamorous rulers of the new Camelot: Werner Janney and Irene Rich as JFK and Jackie. Louis Schwartz was Pierre Salinger, and "Lucky Pierre" was a rousing song and dance number that has been revived a number of times since.

Alex reports that Meyer Feldman, deputy special counsel to President Kennedy attended one of the performances, requested a copy of the script, and later sang at a White House meeting the song vividly rendered by Floretta Chernin to the tune of "Frankie and Johnnie," which begins:

Abie and Arthur were lawyers.
Oh, lawdy, how they could law!
One was a hack for the union;
The other was go-ver-naw.

Now they're machers, you see,
In Washington, D. C.

1962 Helter Shelter. The Janneys wrote this show in record time when show time was arriving and no script was at hand. Nancy Karro directed and Norma Berkeley produced it. The plot line had something to do with the shelter craze which was at its height during this period (remember?). With the wild Janney sense of humor the plot was not as important as the telling. Here is part of some Anne Janney lyrics for a mad psychiatrist's song (sung by Aaron Racusin):

Hush, little sibling, don't be a pest.
Mama's going to get you a Rorschach test.
If that Rorschach test is a flop,
Mama's going to get you electric shock ...

1963 La Dolce Bannockburn. Irene Schneiderman and Sandy Rovner wrote the book, which was only slightly complicated. It had to do with growing affluence in the community, the number of Bannockburners living abroad, a villainous attempt to rezone the community, and a triumphant resolution that involved publishing a mathematics text for the dirty-book trade. The big song was the title song, with lyrics by Sandy Rovner and a memorable performance by Myron Greenwald. This show was produced by Norma Berkeley and directed by Lucy Brightman.

1964 We're from Bannockburn. That was the title of the show, but it is always identified as the "Klanville" show. It was based on the experiences of Nancy Karro and other members of the community during the struggle for integration. (See Nancy's account in "Bannockburn to Danville.") The show was written by June Willenz, with songs contributed by a great number of people. A new production team headed this show: Bernard Miller as director, Madeleine Sigel as producer, and Allan Richardson as music director (the first time we had one in a Bannockburn show). The Washington Post gave the show a big writeup. Ruth Stoller (later Richman) was brave Nancy Barrow. I still remember her and a group of doctors singing a lovely waltz "No Pelvics for Me," with lyrics by Mary-Ellen Sayre and Jack Warshaw.

1965 Fiddler on the Clubhouse Roof. The Bilanows wrote this show, which introduced a newcomer (Galina Volkov) to the institutions and activities of the community. Bubbles Blinder did a memorable belly dance; daddy (Louis Schwartz) was worried about his teenagers' (Anita Ash and Herbert Raskin) chances of getting into Ivy League schools; the playreaders were saluted with a skit called "Tiny Irving," and upward mobility was noted in a song "Bannockburn Heights Will Call You" ("Bali Hai"). Betsy Bilanow directed this show. Madeleine Sigel was the producer.

1966 Batman Comes to Bannockburn. This show, also produced by Madeleine Sigel, brought new writing and directing skills to the spring show. The writer was Edwin Goodpaster and the director was Tom Noonan, who also directed the next two shows. Werner Janney and Herbert Raskin were Batman and Robin. The show featured a mysterious Bat-girl (Barbara Orden), who danced the theme music at intervals through the show. A skit and song from the show -- "Verbal" -- dealt with our community's proclivity for talking on any subject. The spring shows have been staged in various parts of the big room, but Tom moved the stage between the pillars for the Batman show, and it has remained there except for one multistage show we did in 1970.

1967 Bannockburn Shows Strike Back. After 10 years of shows the 1967 show was put together out of bits from the previous years. Many of the cast were people who had not been in the show for several years but were lured back to do their big numbers. It was a very pleasant and sentimental revival. Gloria MacGillivray was the producer, Alvin Schreiber the music director, and Gloria Schwartz the choreographer.

1968 Mam of La Bannockburn. This was another show by the Bilanows, who used the election-year theme to squeeze in every possible candidate. A Republican victory seemed clear, but the strongly partisan Democrats in Bannockburn would never acknowledge it. Nevertheless, there were shifts in loyalties, even among Democrats: a big favorite of the Bannockburn show seemed to be "clean Gene" McCarthy. "Mam" was Galina Volkov, who was wonderful even though her health was failing rapidly (she died at the end of the year). This was Tom Noonan's last Bannockburn show. Louise Goodpaster was producer, and music direction was a joint effort by Nick Heffter and Irene Rich.

1969 Head 'Em Off at Generation Gap. This was a complete change from past shows. It was a multimedia show, integrating slides, light effects, and live action. To the usual piano and drum accompaniment was added a small rock band. Ideas for the show were solicited from a large group of community members.



Collage of spring shows
 Courtesy of Alfred Reifman

The written script by Edwin Goodpaster was about all the excesses of the '60s, from drugs to hair to music to the debacle at the 1968 Democratic Convention. It was Myron Greenwald's last show, and he gave us a powerful opening song -- "Those Were the Days." This was the first Bannockburn show I directed; Hoagy Young put together the mixed media, Allan Richardson was music director, and Madeleine Sigel was producer.

1970 Backing into the Seventies. This was a multistage, multimedia show. The group approach begun the previous year was continued. The multistage concept came out of the group meetings, which produced wild and wonderful ideas. The Bilanows accepted the challenge of combining these ideas and wrote a very black comedy around them. Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos were represented by a trio of demented generals doing the Vietnam Rag. A group of dancers simulated a computer grinding out an endless printout of assorted neuroses that were hardly "Gentle on Our Minds." For Bannockburn government bureaucrats life in the Nixon administration was geared to tolerating "Bird Turds Falling on My Head." However, after all that vexation a mysterious fortune teller with a suspicious accent (Floretta Chernin) read all our horoscopes and saw that, in spite of our "tsuris," ahead of us would be money, good health, money, successful children, and money.

1971 We Just Live Here. This show proved that you could have a show without a director, or an author, or a producer. Everyone got into the act. It was a logical progression from the previous two shows. This time the groups wrote collectively and produced their own effective material. It turned out to be the largest and longest show ever, with the biggest budget. More young people were involved in the 1971 show than in any other, and it uncovered a lot of new talent. Although it was essentially a group show, Hoagy Young is generally credited as being its guru.

1972 The Bannockburn Papers. This production was a collaborative effort by Edwin Goodpaster and the Bilanows with a lot of ideas contributed by the cast. The show featured a mysterious spy (Judith Blinder). There was a grand Billy Graham revival scene in the Nixon White House with the entire Cabinet present (the cast inside huge Humpty Dumpty masks). In a serious bit, Joshua Blinder sang offstage while two little girls (Geraldine Faison and Emily Goodpaster) pantomimed the end of the Bannockburn experiment in an interracial school-exchange program. All the Democratic candidates were featured in a big rally. The Sesame Street gang couldn't spell Nixon's name correctly, and finally an aged J. Edgar Hoover (Louis Schwartz) informed us in song that he had bugged every house in Bannockburn just so he could be "Close to You." Barbara Stevens assisted me in direction and Ruth Darmstadter assisted producer Madeleine Sigel. Allan Richardson was music director again.

1973 Jonathan Bannockburn Beagle. This was a fun show, but it had a harried start. Betsy Bilanow got sick, Alex threw us some scraps of script and a general idea, Saretta Zitver became a lyrics writer, and the Darmstadters wrote their first show, with a little extra material from the Janneys. It had a simple plot: balanced news, dog lovers vs. dog haters, hijackers, food fads and additives, Pat Nixon as a wind-up doll, Kissinger making peace in Bannockburn, group sex, and a Marx Brothers skit. Marina Volkov was our featured beagle, Gloria MacGillivray assisted producer Madeleine Sigel, and Ruth Darmstadter assisted me in direction. Allan Richardson was music director again.

1974 Bannockburn Crude. This show was inspired by the oil embargo. As Arabs and Israelis complicated the plot, Bannockburn struck oil at the clubhouse and promptly set up an independent nation. Led by chairperson Irene Rich, the new nation prospered but quickly became corrupt and decadent. Fortunately the inhabitants were successfully exorcized in time for a rousing finale. The "Lust" number was a big favorite as sinful Beverly Hummel seduced romantic but innocent Maurice Levin. Alfred Reifman was back as director after a mere 17 years. The team of writers included Ruth Darmstadter, Malvin Schechter, Louise Smith, and Saretta Zitver. Nick Heffter was music director and Doris Parker was producer.

1975 Godfather Three. Betsy being well again, the Bilanows wrote another show. The Family Bannockburn was ruled by a powerful godfather, but it turned out that the godmother was even more powerful after Erica Jong taught her to fly. In a sentimental tribute to Bannockburn's 25th anniversary Betsy set some words to "Sunrise, Sunset," sung by a mixed-generation chorus of Werner Janney, Miriam Darmstadter, Nick Heffter, and Irene Rich. The rest of the show maintained the usual insanity as it: disposed of over 20 possible Democratic candidates in a single song; recreated the thirties with a dance marathon, tap-dancing child stars, and Fred and Ginger ballroom-style dancing; and witnessed a fantastic attempt by Evel Knievel to jet-bike over the Cabin John Creek Canyon. A blow was struck for, or against, culture as Professor Stanley Sigel and Monster Walter Benson examined Frankenstein's ethnic roots. Helene Granof and Doris Parker produced; Allan Richardson and I again did our thing with lots of help.

1976 Confessions of a Colonial Dude, or I was a Yankee Doodle Dandy. Edwin Goodpaster, back in the community after an interval in Wisconsin, was inspired to write a Bicentennial show for us. Also inspired, Louise Smith wrote a Bicentennial overture to start things off. Along toward the finale the show had political candidates winning buckets of money (yours and mine), courtesy of the Election Reform Act; Ronnie Reagan told a right-wing bedtime story to a chimpanzee (Joanne Philleo); President Ford tried repeatedly to walk and chew gum; and Richard Nixon and family made another comeback, this time as a hot new psychedelic rock-and-roll group. This was the sixth (last?) show I directed, Nick Heffter was music director, and Helene Granof was producer. Rosalind Raskin helped Helene as often as her failing health would allow.

1977 Mary Bannockburn, Mary Bannockburn. This production was another group writing effort led by Ruth Darmstadter, Louise Smith, Linda Finkelstein, and Saretta Zitver. Ruth and Alfred Reifman codirected, Irma Baron and Diana Dosik coproduced, and Nick Heffter was music director. With Irma in the title role, the show examined life in Bannockburn as an unending, mixed-up soap opera. Along the way the Carter family moved North from Plains with a rousing revivalist send-off by preacher Nick Heffter and the entire Bannockburn choir; Madam Chang Ching and other international no-goodnicks kidnapped Mary's badly disturbed daughter Carrie (Mildred Vreeland); overtalkative plants were studied; and Super Guy, the champ CBer (Walter Benson), came to the rescue just in time for another great finale.

1978...1979... etc. Oh, you can count on it. There will be another Spring Show. You ask why? I'll tell you in just one word -- tradition!

The Halloween Party

In an age of instant traditions the Bannockburn community Halloween party has reached a very respectable level of longevity. At 25 it is probably the oldest continuous community-wide activity of which we can boast.

The idea of a Halloween party originated with Jeanne Tourin, now living in Vermont, but for many years a resident of East Halbert Road. The first party, held in 1951, was a local one, taking place on East Halbert Road, just beyond where the Merrimack houses ended.

The 1952 party was the first planned for the entire community. It was held on Friday, October 31, from 5 to 8 p.m., on the paved section of Bannockburn Drive (the 6200 block), which was closed to traffic. Colored lights were strung from utility poles, the recently planted crabapple trees being much too small to support them. With empty lots and an abundance of lumber scraps at hand, a bonfire was a natural. The supper menu included hamburgers, doughnuts, cider, coffee, and chili; this last item had been prepared by a number of women, each following a standard recipe furnished by the organizers.

The 1953 party started with a "Pots and Pans Marching Band" and ended with a campfire songfest. The Bannockburn Drive location was used that year and in 1954 as well. Rain forced an adjournment to the clubhouse in 1955. Then, in 1956, the party was moved to the newly opened swimming pool parking lot. This location was more spacious than the old one, it was free of traffic, and it could be easily closed off at both ends to simplify ticket sales and collections. The parking lot has been used ever since.

The pattern of the parties soon shook down to that basically followed today on the Saturday afternoon before Halloween: a children's costume parade through the streets, followed by a lunch of grilled hamburgers, apples, doughnuts or cupcakes, soft drinks or cider, and free-form folk dancing.

One thing which has never seemed to change is Sam Silverman's leadership of the folk dancing. Sam, to the children, is Mr. Halloween Party. Except for a couple of years when illness kept him away, Sam has always been there in his Tyrolean outfit and flowing false mustache, prancing the same dances. The routine never goes stale because there's a new crop of little ones each year, discovering the delights of crouching in various odd poses modeled by Sam and Mildred Silverman, only to bounce up again as quickly as possible when the command comes. Many a person who grew up in Bannockburn will never forget that dance, even if he doesn't know that it's Danish in origin and is called "Seven Jumps." The other favorites in Sam's repertoire are "Jibidi-Jibida" from France, "Cherkessia" from Israel, and "Macedonca" from Greece. Even after the community teenagers took over the rest of the party, they asked Sam to stay on so that the new crop of children could still learn the old dances in the same way. When Gloria MacGillivray moved into Bannockburn, her clown's face at the head of the parade soon became almost as familiar a sight as Sam's lederhosen in the middle of the dancing circle.

Another near-constant has been the perfect autumn weather. In all the years there have been only a handful when the party was postponed from Saturday to Sunday because of rain. Old-timers can remember only one year other than 1955 when back-to-back rainy days forced an adjournment to the clubhouse. That was in 1972.

A surprising near-constant has been the price. In 1953 adults paid \$1.00, children, 50 cents; in 1977 the adult price was \$1.50. That the price has remained relatively low can probably be attributed to community club sponsorship (since 1956). Maximum participation has been the goal, even at the cost of a subsidy. One continuing but perhaps inevitable problem has been the number of people who show up at the last minute without having purchased tickets in advance. That has, of course, made estimates of food requirements a chancy affair.

By the 1960's the supply of teenagers in Bannockburn had substantially increased. The adults who had previously run the party were impressed by the helpfulness of the younger people and turned the entire management of the party over to them. Teenagers took over the grilling chores from Dad, the purchase of food and collecting of tickets from Mom, and just about every other job with a minimum of supervision. If anything, the party improved. Music and dancing for teens were added in the late afternoon, after the rest of the crowd had gone. The older set did get one concession: a couple of years ago beer was made available for sale. The soft-drinkers responded in 1976, bringing back cider by the keg.

Attendance at the Bannockburn Halloween party has varied from about 300 to well over 500. A typical ratio has been about 35 percent adults, 15 percent teens, and 50 percent children. It might be interesting to see how those ratios have changed as the community has matured, but this much is certain: there seems to be no imminent danger of Bannockburn's running out of children!

Joseph Maltz



Sam Silverman leading dance at Halloween party
Courtesy of Holgate Young

The Newcomers' Party

A time-honored tradition in Bannockburn is the annual fall party at the clubhouse to welcome newcomers to the community. (Fall in Bannockburn, being somewhat ill-defined, has occasionally extended into January. Newcomers, on the other hand, are clearly defined as those who have arrived since the last party was held.) It's not quite certain just when the first newcomers' party took place, but the newsletter indicates that there was a harvest social and dance in 1955. The publicity that year did not mention newcomers; but in 1956 the fall party was definitely billed by the newly formed community club as an occasion to welcome new neighbors into the community.

As the parties grew in size, the names of newcomers were gathered more or less systematically -- depending on the stage and efficiency of current membership drives for community organizations, or whether a new community directory was in preparation. Neighbors volunteered or were asked to escort the newcomers to the party.

The custom developed of having pre-party get-togethers at the homes of the newcomers' hosts. These, due to the warmth of the hospitality, often led to very late arrivals at the clubhouse of newcomers and their hosts. In 1967 the party -- which until then had been basically a dance and late-evening social -- was changed to a potluck supper; and with the passing years and growing reputation of the gourmet quality of the food, earlier arrival at the clubhouse was achieved. The cocktail parties have largely been supplanted by the wine and hors d'oeuvres served at the clubhouse. Everyone who attends the party, except for those who are being welcomed, is asked to contribute an entrée, salad, or dessert. Several telephone coordinators make sure that not everyone brings the same course. Appetites tend to be very large, and the variety and quality of the food tempt hosts and guests to sample some of everything.

The format of the party has varied over the years, but its basic purposes are unchanged: to bring the adult members of the community together for a social gathering, to renew old friendships after the summer, and to introduce newcomers to the community.

In the early years there was always music, supplied by records or tapes, and entertainment depending on the resources the chairman could marshal. Wanda Maltz, as social chairman of the community club, was perennially responsible for the party during much of that period and in recent years as well.

Occasionally there was live music; one time a band composed of doctors donated their services; another time a teenage combo valiantly adapted its repertoire and style to include music of their parents' vintage as well as that of their own era. In 1959 Pedro Perez taught an introductory lesson on the twist and the pachanga. For several years an art show featuring works by local artists was exhibited over the weekend of the party. Another time there was a playreading, and several times Bubbles Blinder and others led a sing-along with guitar accompaniment. Entertainment most recently has been highlighted by excerpts and reprises from the previous year's spring show, as well as a slide

show by Holgate Young, featuring Bannockburn locales and activities on three screens. This combination gives newcomers a quick introduction to the essence of Bannockburn.

Usually the community club president or another representative of the local bureaucracy gives an introduction to the intricacies of the various community organizations, so that newcomers can at least be aware of BCA, BCC, and BCI. With the atmosphere often heightened by the BYOB aspects of the evening, the amount of enlightenment may at times have been suspect, but the warmth of the welcome is never in doubt.

Newcomers are often amazed to find they are living in a community where people can really get to know their neighbors. For some, it reinforces their decision that Bannockburn was the place where they had always wanted to live. For others, it is a source of delight to learn that, at least in one corner of a metropolitan area, they can find the warmth of smalltown neighborliness and hospitality.

Betty Wagman

When we moved in on Owen Place in 1951, there was no road, just a mud outline on the hillside. To enter the house you walked (or slid) further down the hillside and went up half a flight of stairs to the deck. We had our gas and electricity, but no telephone. And our newborn kid developed serious symptoms when she was 10 weeks old.

Since there was no road, naturally we had more rain than any spring in human memory. Furthermore, every time it rained the streambed was so clogged with debris of building, interlaced among fallen trees, that the entire valley flooded.

Dr. Roth of Group Health nevertheless parked her car on Braeburn Place and managed to struggle across the whole rotten mess to examine the baby and recommend hospitalization. Whereupon the family followed the doctor's route in reverse, carrying the baby, who underwent surgery at Children's Hospital in due time.

Baby's recovery was uneventful. Even the parents recovered somehow. More to the point: since this is Bannockburn, one weekend that summer, dozens of hard-working neighbors got together and removed the fallen trees, the debris, and all other obstacles to flowing water. From that time forward, although the stream occasionally filled its banks, it never overflowed until very recently. And even then, when this circumstance was mentioned in the newsletter, another work party took place, and the streambed was cleared again.

We got a road the next fall. We got a telephone after about a year. We take both for granted now and can't even remember exactly when we did get them. But nothing has really been more important to us than the gathering of the neighbors and the clearing of the stream.

The Wood Family

Bannockburn Nursery School, Inc.

The nursery school had its beginnings even before the pilot project was completed in the spring of 1950. By November 1949 a school committee, headed by Marjory Weiss and including Jeanne Tourin, Pearl Stewart, Yetta Weisz, and Naomi Wood, had obtained zoning approval for the use of two rooms in the clubhouse for a nursery school (the large room in the western wing and the octagonal room). Fire, health, and building department approval was also obtained, subject to compliance with certain requirements, such as rehanging doors to open outward and installing fire extinguishers and fireproof partitions between the two rooms.

Progress on the school was reported to members of Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI) by Marjory Weiss in a November 19 letter telling them that "Bannockburn's organized community life is being launched with our ready plans for the Bannockburn Cooperative Nursery School." A penny (!) postcard was enclosed so that residents and future residents could let the committee know of the children who would be eligible for the school during the next two years. The letter also asked for participation in a "White Elephant sale" on December 3 and 4 to raise money for the school.

Ed. Note: Nursery School minutes show that during the spring and summer of 1950, plans for the school continued to be developed by a steering committee composed of committee chairmen: Hannah Kaiser (teacher selection), Yetta Weisz (bylaws), Zelda Janus (budget), Sylvia Pechman and Mrs. Gardiner (membership), Mrs. Chandler, replaced by Eva van de Erve (equipment), Ethel Hoeber (health). Fia McDowell headed the steering committee, and Lois Vicinus was secretary. By June 1950 Fia McDowell had submitted a formal request to the BCI board for use of the two rooms for the school from September 1950 to June 1951 at a rental of \$50 per month. The tentative budget for the first year included \$150 per month for the teacher's salary.

While the mothers were busy organizing the school, the fathers built equipment. Henry Vicinus and other fathers built shelves for toys and other equipment and picket fences to mark off the play area at the back of the clubhouse. Harry Yaffee supervised the erection of swings, with frames constructed from pipes Albert Small and Harry had dug up from the golf club's irrigation system. Arthur McDowell and William Newman formed a lasting friendship as a result of working together to build a group swing requested by the teacher. (This was suspended from two large trees and came to be known later as the "airplane" swing.) Other fathers tackled the 4-foot high weeds in the play yard with their brand-new reel-type lawnmowers. Books and toys were acquired by begging or borrowing, purchased only when there was no other way to get them.

There weren't enough small children in Bannockburn at that time to make up a complete group, so children from other neighborhoods were recruited by means of flyers and a radio announcement by Sylvia Pechman.

The school opened in September 1950 with one class of 18 children, a combination of 3- and 4-year olds. Lucille Ezekiel was the teacher. (She was available only for that one year.) Each day three mothers assisted the teacher on a rotating basis; in one instance the mother and father took turns participating. Eva van de Erve was the first president.

Immediately there was a big problem: construction of the Merrimack homes also started in September, and access to the clubhouse from MacArthur Boulevard was cut off. Mothers had to walk their children across the creek from Braeburn Place and up the hill or else drive to the end of Barr Road and then venture across the open field to the clubhouse, a route that soon became rutted and muddy.

Ed. Note: At the September 16, 1950 BCI board meeting it was announced that Mr. Morrell, clerk-of-the-works, "will be available with his car with chains on it at the end of the paved portion of Barr Road and will transport children back and forth on days on which the road is impassable to driving mothers but on which it is, in his judgment, passable to himself." It was not until April 1951 that cars could get from MacArthur Boulevard to the clubhouse road, via Bannockburn Drive and West Halbert Road.

The absence of a paved road became a serious problem in the winter. On days when deep snow made walking difficult, the children assembled in the basement of the Church of the Redeemer in Fairway Hills. (Word as to the location of the school on any given day was spread by means of a telephone chain.) Here, the unpartitioned space and absence of regular equipment did not provide the "growth environment" the parents sought for their children. BCI kindly agreed to a lower rental during this period to compensate for the expense of the substitute quarters.

In addition to the value derived by both parents and children from the actual nursery school experience, there was also the increased knowledge of child rearing which the mothers obtained from the membership meetings, held twice monthly, at which child development specialists spoke and at which specific aspects of child rearing were discussed.

Discipline, of course, was a popular topic. How much permissiveness should be allowed? (Not much.) Sylvia Small recalls being kicked in the shins by two of the little monsters whom she was assigned to keep from disturbing the group. "The idea I was trying to get across is that self-discipline is the only kind that amounts to anything -- building up judgment within the child," recalls Mrs. Ezekiel.

Many decisions, large and small, had to be made at the membership meetings. Should Bannockburn children have priority in future enrollment? (Yes.) Which mothers were suitable candidates for the office of president? What should

be served for the morning snack? In typical Bannockburn fashion every decision was thoroughly debated.

In the fall of 1951 the school opened with two groups, one for 3-year olds, the other for 4-year olds, under the guidance of teachers Marjory Weiss and Ruth Lebergott, both Bannockburn mothers. The large room in the east wing was put to use, and a second play area was fenced off at the southwest corner of the clubhouse. Hannah Kaiser was president that year.

Ed. Note: During the August preceding the third year, the fathers were required to put in 10 hours of weekend work, refurbishing the nursery rooms and equipment. They painted floors and walls, hosed down the large braided rag rugs, repaired toys, built more shelves, fashioned pieces to complete jigsaw puzzles, varnished the wooden climber known as the "jungle gym," and covered all the play tables with a durable, bright yellow vinyl. The weekend before the opening of school, when all was ready except the overgrown play yards, Charles Stewart postponed an important engagement to mow the tall grass with the only rotary mower owned by a nursery school parent. Chalmers Roberts built a gate for the front play yard. Gertrude Landay and Stacey Brooks served as presidents that year. Marjory Weiss and Ann Martin were the teachers.

The big event in 1956-57, during Rosalind Raskin's presidency, was the gala party held at the clubhouse in January 1957 to raise money for the school. The theme of the party -- the Roaring Twenties -- was carried out by the participants' period clothing and the music of the twenties provided by Eugene Confrey's combo. Joet Thurber belted out some hit songs of that decade, and Constance Moerman kicked up her heels in "The Varsity Drag," supported by a male chorus line. Batya Heller, a professional dancer, who later taught dance classes at the clubhouse, also performed. The evening was a thoroughgoing success, both socially and financially.

By 1957 the preschool population of Bannockburn had grown so much that the formation of a third group became imperative. "Just a temporary addition," Betty Wagman told the BCI board in her letter of request. Led by Clare Belman, a group of devoted parents transformed a dingy storage room adjoining the grill-room into suitable quarters. Clare worked hard on getting the room to conform to county heating, lighting, and safety standards.

Ed. Note: In 1959 the members decided to incorporate in order to limit liability, in case of suit, to the assets held by the school. The school was incorporated under the name "Bannockburn Nursery School" by Sylvia Hamers, Saretta Zitver, and Clare Belman. Although the word "cooperative" was dropped from its name, the school continued to operate the same way as before.

There have been many teachers through the years, each leaving her personal imprint on the school. Different as their personalities were, however, their philosophies were never very far from the one worked out by the earliest residents. In addition to those already mentioned, other teachers fondly remembered from the early years were Claire Bloomberg, Lynn Abrams, and Dorothy Krueger. At a party not long ago, Marjory Weiss, who continued teaching until 1957, met some of her first Bannockburn pupils, now in their early thirties. "They still had a very live memory of nursery school," she said. "It was a real part of their lives. Associates they met in nursery school were with them through all their school years, and they remember the nursery school in a positive light."

Ed. Note: Almost a quarter of a century after the school's birth it still occupies the same quarters, which have become increasingly attractive as improvements were made each year. But the proportion of Bannockburn children has decreased greatly: three-fourths of the children enrolled at the present time come from outside the Bannockburn community, some from as far away as Potomac.

Naomi Wood

Incident at the Clubhouse

Back in the 1950's, you may recall, the "Davy Crockett" song was all the rage. Since the song and its rhythmic resonance were clearly in the public domain, Jack Karro, then president of Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc., did what all Bannockburn songwriters do: he adapted the song to the needs of the Spring Show. The original words of the Davy Crockett song -- a lengthy chronicle -- celebrates him and his exploits, with each stanza winding up with the refrain, "Davy, Davy Crockett, king of the wild frontier." Jack Karro decided to celebrate the pioneers in our midst, by celebrating the accomplishments, trials, and tribulations of Mary Herling in the creation of Bannockburn. Each of his stanzas wound up with the refrain: "Mary, Mary Herling, queen of the home front here." It was sung lustily during and after the show. The week following, with the Bannockburn version fresh in the minds of the community, two children from the nursery school, housed in the clubhouse, met Mary on the steps. (The Herlings were then living in the upstairs apartment of the clubhouse.) "Hello, Mary," said one tike. Mary returned the greeting. As she passed by, she heard the second child ask her more knowledgeable friend: "Who is she?" "Don't you know?" was the reply. "Why, she's Davy Crockett's wife."

John Herling

The Bannockburn PTA

For Montgomery County parents of elementary school children the first Tuesday of the month is the night for the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting. Bannockburn parents, like many others, have often wished the PTA would go away, but they have always supported it, to the great benefit of their children and the community.

The Clara Barton Elementary School was the one to which children of Bannockburn's first residents were assigned. With Edward Wenk, Jr., as president, the Clara Barton PTA voted on April 5, 1955 to recommend to the school board that integration be instituted beginning in September of that year.

Outstanding among our memories of the Clara Barton PTA is the Mardi Gras, the annual fund raiser. It took place on the school grounds, and a lot of work went into transforming them to a "fair" grounds. Merchandise donated by area merchants, homemade cakes, and pot holders woven by the pupils were offered for sale. All the usual fair attractions were available and one unusual one: an auction where a child might buy a puppy to surprise his parents. All participants had a gay time but the project was abandoned because it required so much work, and the needed money could be raised by increasing PTA dues.

When the Bannockburn Elementary School opened in September 1957, a gift was received from the Clara Barton PTA to help get the Bannockburn PTA under way. The first officers were: Herbert Blackman, president; Charles Denny, vice-president; Cecil Eidson, corresponding secretary; Louise Branstead, recording secretary; and Eleanor Hoffman, treasurer.

All went relatively smoothly at Bannockburn Elementary until it was announced that Margaret T. Jones had been hired by the school board to replace Alexander Gottesman, the first principal. She had excellent qualifications, but she was black. Some parents felt that the Bannockburn school was being used as a "social experiment," but the majority approved of the choice. Mrs. Jones spent many productive years at the school and often participated in PTA programs, as she did when she spoke on "Creative and Critical Thinking."

Very exciting -- perhaps even useful -- was Bannockburn's own "Little White House Conference on Children and Youth," which the PTA held on March 1, 1960. It was patterned after the "Golden Anniversary White House Conference" to be held at the White House shortly thereafter. The theme was "For a Creative Life in Freedom and Dignity." Topics included juvenile delinquency, emotionally disturbed children, leisure, and the shaping of ideals. Eight sixth-graders joined the discussion.

Drama played its part in PTA programs. Teachers acted in a play published by Family Living Services. Parents presented "Who's Teaching?" by Irene Schneiderman and Sandy Rovner. So well was the latter received that it was given at a

meeting of the Elementary School Principals' Association.

At one meeting parents permitted their views to be taped and the next month heard a panel base its discussion on their remarks. The subject was "PTA -- How It Affects You As a Parent, How It Affects Teachers, and How It Affects County Education Levels."

A major project promoted and fought for by the PTA was the "Open School," with black children from the District enrolling in the Bannockburn school. (See "The Bannockburn Open School Program.")

On March 6, 1968 Dr. David Eberley, president of the Montgomery County Education Association, and Mr. Charles Saunders, member of the Board of Education, discussed issues in the teachers' strike then in progress. This resulted in a statement by the PTA board strongly supporting the teachers' demands.

What else have we talked about at PTA? Curriculum, reading, music, science, pre-adolescence, recreation, guidance, school budget -- these are just a few samples. There were more controversial issues: FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary School), an after-school program which Bannockburners mostly supported; and the Amidon Plan, mostly opposed because some of its tenets were a highly structured curriculum, exclusive use of the phonovisual method in teaching reading, and whole-class instruction. Programs almost always have been interesting and informative, with qualified Bannockburn residents often called upon to participate with school board members, school staff, and other experts. A popular feature of PTA life has been its "Open House" at the first meeting of every school year, when teachers and parents meet in the classroom to view and discuss the class's activities.

An understanding of the school system and how it affects our children, a chance to improve county school policies, a good relationship among faculty, parents, and students -- all of these are fostered by the PTA. Knowing this, Bannockburn parents continue, sometimes happily, often unwillingly, on their journey through the 6 years of the Bannockburn Elementary School PTA.

Charlotte Chase

I remember the day we moved into Bannockburn -- a sweltering July 4, quite like Missouri's tropical summers. My daughter and I had house-sat the afternoon before, waiting for the gas and telephone workers to connect us officially to their meters. Changing our positions every so often in the heat, we had just staked out a piece of shade in the back yard when what should appear but a tray full of raspberry sherbert and cookies delivered by a neighbor, Doris Rall, who with her husband Udo were among the original Bannockburn cooperators. From that moment on, 2-year-old Barbara became Doris's devoted follower. Who else could make a carefully held blade of grass sing? or walk frontwards by going backwards? or know where the raspberry bushes are in the ravine? Doris was our introduction to Bannockburn -- there could have been no finer welcome.

Beverly F. Nelson

The Sitters' Club

The original Bannockburn residents were basically very busy people with small children. They were not only socially active but also organization prone and needed to get away from the children not only sometimes but often. Since there were few teenagers in the area, parents had to depend upon one another to solve their baby-sitting problem. And so, in 1950, the tradition of the cooperative was carried a step further to the formation of a cooperative sitters' club.

When the next group of houses was built in late 1951 -- Laverock Court plus Wilson Lane plus Braeburn Place II -- a second sitters' cooperative was formed. At about the same time, the lower Bannockburn Drive area sitters' group came into being. In 1958 a separate group was formed when Wilson Knolls (otherwise known as Upper Bannockburn) was developed. Each of the four groups thrived except for temporary periods when some children became old enough to stay with their siblings. When these teenagers began their own socializing (or earned money for sitting elsewhere), their parents returned to the club. Eventually, as the younger children outgrew the need for sitters and the activity decreased, there were two separate mergers: the pilot project with Braeburn Place II, and the upper with the lower part of Bannockburn Drive. Finally, these clubs were formed into the one existing today, which includes the entire Bannockburn Elementary School district.

With possibly minor variation the system, which is still being used by the present Sitters' Club, is as follows:

Either a mother or father does the sitting for another family and receives credit for the number of hours spent. It is like a bank where the sitter deposits time, and the sittee withdraws the time spent. The group at times has doubled the time earned after midnight and on Friday and Saturday nights. Refreshments are supplied for sustenance.

Each month a new secretary fills the requests for sitters and keeps records of the number of hours and fractions of hours accrued. The member who has the largest negative balance is the first one called upon when a member requests a sitter. Many sighs of relief have occurred over the years as the monthly grand total of plus-time has equalled the grand total of minus-time. Although it is usually the parents who provide this service, I recall the 6-year-old daughter of a neighbor who did a good job of supplying the sitters, with all the telephoning it entailed, whenever her parents had the books. She probably would have been a good sitter as well.

Of course New Year's Eve has always presented a problem. This was solved by a group on West Halbert Road and Bannockburn Drive. Each year a different couple gave a New Year's Eve party. Every half hour the parents would take turns gathering all the house keys and going to each house to check on the children's welfare and to be sure they were not having their own parties.

At present the club has 30 family members. Its activities have expanded to daytime sitting at the sitter's house. The members exchange tools, baby cribs, and household items and will soon exchange services: piano lessons, haircuts, and repairs.

Even grandparents have participated in the club's services for their grandchildren -- another indication that it will always be a part of the cooperative life here in Bannockburn.

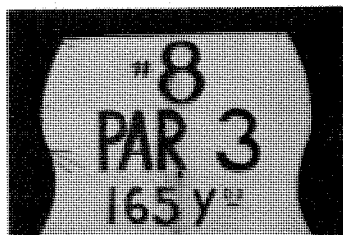
Saretta Zitver

Our family moved from Virginia into our home in the pilot project on a cold, rainy November day in 1949, with no heat in the house and the kitchen equipment sitting in the living room. Why? We wanted to be eligible to vote in the 1950 elections.

The boys, Donald and Martin, soon were swinging over the creek from a heavy rope thrown over a tall tree branch, and within the year our daughter Carol Ann was given a bridal shower by our neighbors: she was the first Bannockburn bride. All three of our children have retained a deep feeling for their home in the woods, although they each lived in it but a few years, since they were in their teens when we moved in.

Carol Ann's wedding in September 1950 was to be held in the clubhouse. However, after the invitations were in the mail the builder of the Merrimack houses decided to start construction, so the only road was ripped up, making it impossible for guests to reach the clubhouse. The MacIntyre family has never forgotten when the Merrimack houses were built.

In our den we have an 11"x9" wooden plaque picked up by one of the boys when our family walked over the original golf course after it had been purchased by the co-op. Here's how it looks, still in the same place on the wall:



And now, regretfully, we are planning to sell our home with its many happy memories because we feel the need to relieve ourselves of the responsibility of keeping the property in good condition. We will always feel a part of this community which, because of our deep faith in its potential, we helped bring into being and which has kept faith with us in many ways.

The MacIntyres

Bannockburn Swimming Club, Inc.

Part I. The Beginnings: Two Recollections

The first few summers in Bannockburn were hot and uncomfortable for children and parents alike. Houses had no air-conditioning, ocean beaches were 5 to 8 hours away by poor roads and via ferry. Bay beaches were a disappointment, and mountain lakes required a trip of 100 miles or more. Although the Glen Echo Amusement Park swimming pool was within half a mile of our homes, it was too crowded to be adequately supervised by the lifeguards.

Neighbors talked early about building a local pool, but it wasn't until the Garrett Park community actually completed one that it seemed a possibility for Bannockburn. So in the summer of 1954 we formed a Bannockburn Club to Build a Swimming Pool and began work.

Ed. Note: The first board of directors consisted of the following persons from Bannockburn and neighboring communities: Melvin Pollack, president; Roger Nelson, vice-president; Constance Moerman, secretary; Harry Yaffee, treasurer; Helen Eden, membership chairman; Eugene Congress, Stephen Wright, Jackson Brodsky, Frank McGrady, David Feller, and Ralph Fleischman. The following year the board was re-elected, with David Feller as president and Melvin Pollack as vice-president. When Harry Yaffee moved away, George Lent became treasurer.

First we visited the Garrett Park pool, a magnificent creation to our parched eyes: 30 by 100 feet. But the pool had been made possible by the accidental fact that the community was pierced by the railroad line, and all property close to the tracks was zoned industrial. Residential areas of Montgomery County then were zoned only for the construction of homes, schools, museums, or churches. With other newly formed groups, we combined in a campaign to obtain a county ordinance authorizing community pools. The council acted with remarkable promptness on our request.

Now to select a location. There were several possibilities in the Bannockburn stream valley, but opposition to the location of the pool seemed almost unanimous on the part of adjoining property owners, who were concerned about having their peace and quiet disturbed by pool activities.

Ed. Note: A meeting was held to resolve the conflict between those wanting a pool and those opposing it. Some homeowners whose property abutted the proposed pool site wanted certain restrictions put into a covenant; other persons argued in favor of a contractual agreement between the club and Bannockburn Cooperators, Inc. (BCI). The BCI board met with a club representative to discuss the conditions under which BCI would be willing to sell valley land to the club.

Ed. Note (continued): On October 10, 1954 the board authorized an option to the club to purchase not less than 2½ acres at \$1,200 an acre, with the understanding that the club's obligations to the abutting property owners would be put in writing.

On October 21, 1954 club president Melvin Pollack wrote to the BCI board, expressing the club's desire to protect the abutting homeowners as fully as possible. On behalf of the club he made the following promises:

1. A prohibition against trespassing on private property in the area will be strictly enforced; if necessary by suspension or revocation of membership privileges.
2. Members of the Club, their families, and guests, will be required to use certain carefully selected approaches to the swimming pool site.
3. No boisterous play will be countenanced.
4. Acoustical and visual screening will be promptly provided.
5. The pool will not be open after sundown.
6. Complaints by property owners in the area will be considered at once and necessary remedial action taken.

A subcommittee of the board met several times with club representatives during November to discuss terms of sale agreeable to both the club and the abutting homeowners. The club agreed to present for the board's consideration a landscape architect's plan of plantings designed to provide adequate sight and sound screening.

The Bannockburn Swimming Club (BSC) was incorporated on December 16, 1954 by Melvin Pollack, Roger Nelson, and Constance Moerman as a nonprofit organization without capital stock. In January 1955 the BCI board instructed the club to develop Laverock Lane and the area between lots 16 and 18 in block 1 as rights-of-way.

On April 9, 1955 the board executed a deed of sale to the club of 3 acres for \$3,300. The land is subject to two covenants: (1) the property may be used only for a swimming pool "or for residential or other uses similar to those in the surrounding area..." and (2) the pool must close by 8 p.m. Either restriction may be lifted if "the owners of at least three-fourths of the 14 neighboring lots shall otherwise agree in writing..."

Finally the board got plans drawn up and went in search of a builder. One individual conducted a high-pressure campaign and won the contract at the price we wanted. We saw the bulldozers begin in the valley at the end of Laverock -- soon we would be swimming in comfort in our own neighborhood!

But 1955 was another "dry" summer. The builder, well toward completion, seemed to lose interest. The last stage, including the filtration equipment, was never installed. Our contract had a penalty clause, and soon it was a standoff: we had no pool, and the builder had a big penalty staring at him. We were able to negotiate a settlement that allowed us to bring in another builder to finish the job. And we charged our members "dues" in 1955 so as to add a few extras that we decided we wanted.

And in June of 1956 we were open for business! You really need to have endured those hot, no-swimming summers as we did to appreciate what it meant to plunge into those welcome waters, so close to home and perhaps even, as we did, stroll through the peaceful valley on the way to and from the pool, to savor this new pleasure in our surroundings. A club of 409 members in 230 families had a new playground.

Many years have passed since the 1956 opening season. Community pools dot the landscape. Yesterday's swimming team members are today's recruits for pool managers. The valley leading to the pool has lost its pine trees to the towering oaks and sycamores. The trees to the west of the pool have grown so high that evening seems to come an hour earlier to the devoted band who swim on weekdays after coming home from work.

The pleasure of swimming is still as real as it was back in 1956.

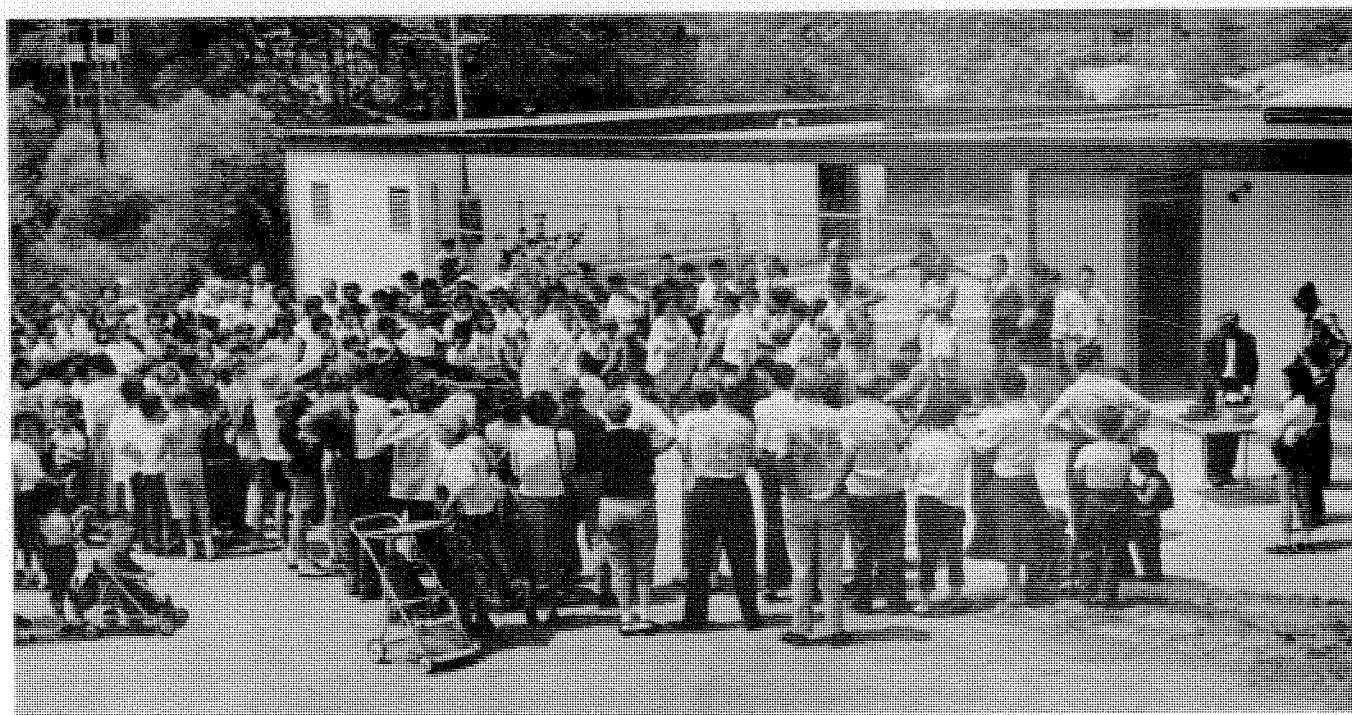
Albert and Sylvia Small

As the first president of Bannockburn Swimming Club, Inc. I gratefully recall the board of directors and what they did to make the pool possible. When membership lagged, Helen Eden, Constance Moerman, and Roger Nelson put on a weekend door-to-door drive and signed up enough members to meet a deadline so that we could go ahead with the construction of the pool. Lawyers Jack Brodsky, David Feller, and Melvin Pollack negotiated a construction contract and arranged a settlement for completion of the pool and collection of a \$4,000 penalty for the delay in completion. Eugene Congress hired an engineer and saw to it that he submitted blueprints for a pool (36 by 83 feet) built to Navy specifications -- enough iron reinforcement to build a skyscraper or sink a battleship. (A wading pool was also built.) George Lent kept excellent financial records and attended to the pool landscaping.

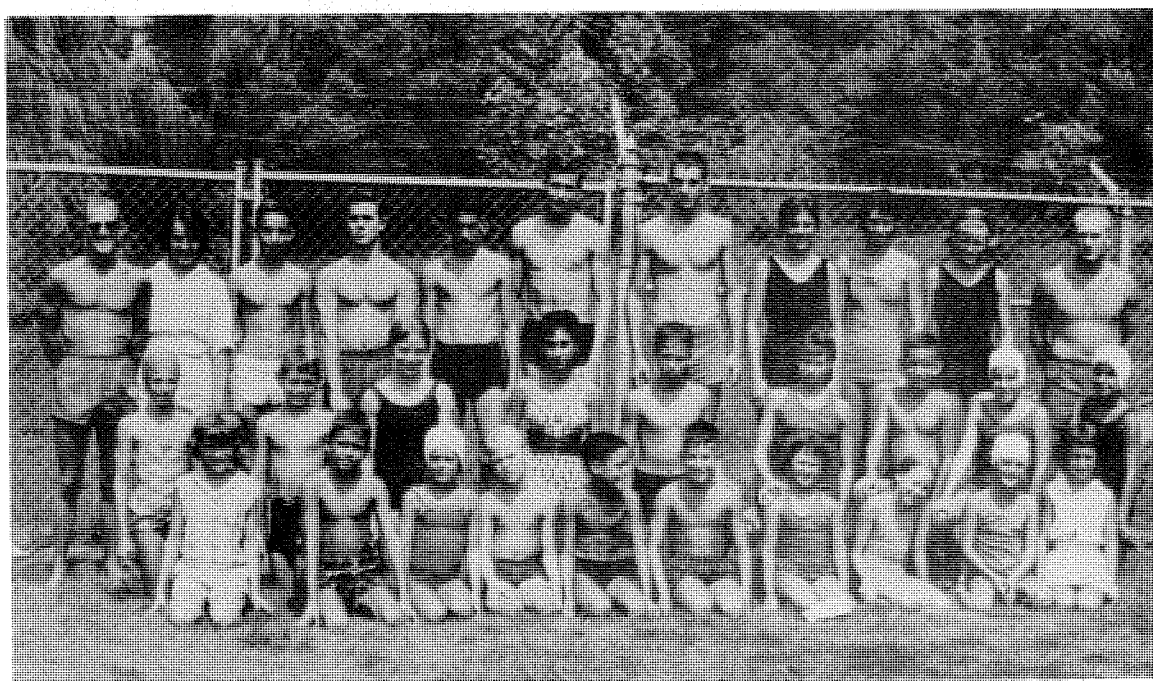
We'll never forget the day construction came to a dead halt when the Park and Planning Commission withheld a permit because the original plat filed by the Bannockburn co-op called for a road and shopping center on the pool property. The commission relented about two weeks later because the swimming pool hole had been dug at considerable expense, and it seemed unlikely that a road through the valley would ever be needed.

Nor shall we ever forget the heroic plumber who, unaided, put in all the piping around the pool during a blistering hot July and August.

No account of pool construction would be complete without mention of Sam Silverman, who masterminded a complete renovation of the pool over the last several years.



Ceremony at opening of swimming pool, 1956
Courtesy of Sam Silverman



Bannockburn's first swimming team, 1959
Courtesy of Sam Silverman

Part II. Sport and Society

Bannockburn was one of the founding members of the Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL), a summer program of competitive swimming for teams of children from the county's community pools. Starting with 10 clubs in 1959, the league has been adding new members every year and had grown to 65 teams by 1977.

Each team has five Saturday morning meets during the summer, followed by division and league championship meets at the end of the season. Other annual events include the league long-course meet and the division and league relay carnivals, which are well described as appearing as frantic as the legendary Chinese fire drill.

Membership on the Bannockburn swim team has always been open to any boy or girl up to age 17 (in recent years 18) who can swim a length with ease and is willing to train with the team. Some of the 6- and 7-year-old "minnows" have been among the most dedicated competitors. Team membership offers the opportunity for camaraderie, conditioning, and competition, and the pool has been the center of summer activities for team members.

The swim team has afforded team parents and other swim club members the opportunity to represent the club in MCSL affairs and to participate as swim meet officials. Team activities have required dedicated coaches, dedicated swimmers, and dedicated officials -- dedication meaning, in part, no summer vacations between the first dual meet and the last league championships in mid-August.

Bannockburn has a tradition of enthusiasm, hard work at daily practices, sound coaching in swimming techniques, and participation by as many swimmers as possible, factors which were needed to compensate for the fact that Bannockburn's membership is smaller than almost any of the other teams. Events in the meets are organized so that swimmers of all ages, both boys and girls, can make an equal contribution to the point total: the outcome of each meet depends on everyone. The Bannockburn tradition also includes emphasis on learning sportsmanship -- to win and to lose with equal grace.

At Bannockburn the manager is also the coach, and we have been fortunate in the caliber of manager-coaches we have had and the contributions they have made to the development of Bannockburn youth. Among the outstanding manager-coaches have been Stan Pitts, who in his 3 years as coach brought the team from a record of winning only 1 of its 5 dual meets to a 4-1 record; Jim Shipman who, with Beau Shetterly's help, coached the team to its first division championship and division meet championship; Roger Kamuf, who kept the team winning with a division meet championship; and Larry Wagman, a long-term outstanding swim team member who returned from college to become manager-coach and had an undefeated season in one of the 4 years he was there.

At the end of each season team members vote to pick the boy and girl who have made the greatest contribution to the team. Usually, the older swimmers on the team have won, but on at least three occasions the team's highest honor has gone to 8-year-olds. We are not sure our records are complete, but we think, going back to 1961, that the winners of the Outstanding Swimmer Trophy have been: Janet Howard, Dave Pollack, Jere Confrey, Leigh Emerson (twice), Steve Bilanow

(twice), Claire Lewis, Art Korb (twice), Barbara Hamers (twice), Lynn Howard (twice), Larry Wagman, Lynn Emerson, Toby Bilanow (three times), Puma Dexter, Rob Hamers (twice), Sherri Foreman, Bernie Greenspan, Nancy Wagman, Jeff Stambler (twice), Kenny Wagman, Mary Cox (three times), Mike Johnston (twice), Molly Blieden, Janet Mansfield, and Andrea McAuley.

In recent years the coach has presented awards to the swimmers who have made the greatest effort to improve. Those plaques have been awarded to Dierdre Band, Lala Cox, Laurel Rippey, Jill Stackhouse, Sam Johnston, Carol Mansfield, Lauren Dodek, Craig Bennett, Lisa Levinson, and Gail Granof.

The pool also has been the center of summer community social events. With a minimum of planning -- just announcing the date and time -- potluck dinners materialize, with large amounts of salads, casseroles, and desserts. These biweekly events are termed "the best restaurant in town" by the community's sophisticated diners. In addition to regular potlucks, we have had family picnics and holiday celebrations. The highlight was the Bicentennial Fourth of July, featuring champagne and ice cream. Repeated the next year by popular demand, it may well become a regular annual event.

Pool membership doesn't necessarily involve swimming. Many regulars at the pool spend their time reading, playing bridge, child- or girl- watching, catching up on gossip, or just lazing in the sun.

With the more active members water games are always popular: the international "Marco Polo," our own creation "Poppit," and the mysterious underwater "Beaver." The annual Labor Day Carnival features a variety of competitive events: retrieving coins from the pool bottom, the six-and-under cross-pool race, the ping-pong blow, and what are sometimes described as the Oedipus Relays (teams of mother-son, father-daughter, brother-sister, etc.), climaxed by the Marlin Cup race when the staff takes on all challengers for the prized trophy-- a coffee can filled with freshly cut weeds.

The social calendar closes with the Swim Team Banquet at the clubhouse. Team members do all the planning and work, the coach gives out the awards, and parents gladly pay the price of admission for the pleasure of seeing all the swimmers clean, combed, and in their best clothes.

Following all this excitement Bannockburners luxuriate in a privilege not offered at most pools: the pool stays open in the afternoons well into September, catering to dedicated lap-swimmers and sun-bathers as long as the sun shines-- and even when it doesn't. It's on those brisk, sparkling autumn afternoons that we often reflect on our good fortune in having our own pool and the significant contribution it makes to Bannockburn's way of life.

Ed. Note: Participating in the county-wide Swim-In Program from 1972 to 1975, BSC made its pool available to many inner-city children for weekly swimming lessons and enjoyment of the pool.

Dan Hamers and Anne Mansfield *

* Past presidents of the BSC.

Community Arts Project

Once upon a time (in the spring of 1951), there was a young mother who lived on Wilson Lane and who was raising a budding artist. But there was no place in the neighborhood to nurture this talent, except far, far away, across the meadow and down East-West Highway to the Silver Spring Cooperative Nursery School. There Cornelia Uditsky was teaching creative art to young children under the sponsorship of the Community Arts Association.

This class was scheduled at the "happy hour" from 3:30 to 5:30 and "supper must be on the table." Traffic jams abounded at that hour on East-West Highway, so Sylvia Pechman and Constance Moerman decided that this Cultural Experience must be brought to Bannockburn.

By appealing to their social consciences, they persuaded the Community Arts board of directors that Bethesda was a culturally disadvantaged area and that in Bannockburn there was a FACILITY that could commodiously house such a project: the clubhouse. And thus the Community Arts Project of Bannockburn was born. That was just the beginning. Unwittingly, they (WE) had taken on two 50-hours-a-week jobs, sans salary and sans fringe benefits. They spent the next year on the telephone, selling, persuading, organizing, and so on. Art, dance, and drama classes for children began in the fall of 1951.

From simply trying to avoid the traffic at dusk, they had developed a major enterprise with a budget, obligations, parent committees, board of directors, and standards for creative activities. The program expanded to meet the needs and dreams of the community. There were dance classes for mothers as well as children, creative drama, pre-instrumental music, and Cornelia Uditsky's art classes for children. Evelyn Davis taught dance classes for a number of years, continuing into the period when arts activities were sponsored by the Bannockburn Community Club.

Adventure Theatre, produced by parents for a children's audience, grew out of the Community Arts Association program. Several Bannockburn parents have participated in Adventure Theatre productions, which were first given at Leland Junior High School and now are presented on weekends at Glen Echo Park.

Sylvia Pechman and Constance Moerman

Children's Recreation

The YMCA Day Camp

The idea of having a day camp in Bannockburn originated in 1955 with the Bannockburn Recreation Committee, which I headed. The other members were Jeanne Goldman, Laura Jacobson, and Anita Bickford. We distributed a questionnaire to residents of the community and got an enthusiastic response. Plans were made to start a camp that summer but fell through when the person hired to be director had to back out at the last moment.

The following year we negotiated with the Bethesda-Chevy Chase YMCA to run the camp. The day-camp committee worked hard in developing the basic plans, stimulating community interest, and getting zoning approval for the camp. My husband Leon helped us with the legal aspects.

Ed. Note: In 1956 the day-camp committee consisted of co-chairmen Gloria Schwartz and Gertrude Landay, plus Anita Bickford, Edythe Blackman, Stacey Brooks, Laura Jacobson, Anita Gamson, Roberta Leib, and Wanda Maltz. During the 6 weeks of camp 142 children between the ages of 6 and 12 participated in one or more of three 2-week sessions.

The camp used the clubhouse as a central headquarters and held activities in the surrounding grounds and valley. Arrangements were made with the group of residents who owned the undeveloped area above the swimming pool for its use as a campsite and with the Bannockburn Swimming Club for the use of the pool.

There were the usual campfires, sleepouts, and breakfast and supper cookouts. Laverock Court residents could hear the giggles and excited voices of the campers. The children enjoyed special trips and the excitement of putting on a performance for parents at the end of each session. There were some worrisome moments and freak accidents, but with Dr. Vita Jaffee (Karpinos) at hand to cope with such emergencies, no one suffered any serious injury.

As the years went by, there were new crops of children, different directors, and, eventually, some of the first campers became counselors and junior counselors. The camp ran successfully through the summer of 1969.

The Boys' Group

Although there were dance classes for girls aged six to eight, there was nothing for the young boys. There were no playgrounds within safe walking distance, where the boys could romp about and let go of their pent-up energies. So Jeanne Goldman and I decided to start a group of lead-up athletic activities for boys that age. After much negotiation we interested the Montgomery County Recreation Department in sponsoring such a program at the clubhouse early in 1954. Although the department was the official sponsor, Jeanne and I hired the personnel, advertised the activity, enrolled the children, and collected the fees. After the first few years we decided, since we were doing all the work anyway,

to continue the program under the sponsorship of the Bannockburn Community Club.

After the first year or so, Ed Mulhern was hired to lead the group and continued to do so for a number of years; then his son became the leader.

The youngsters had a great time tumbling and doing exercises, as well as learning preparatory skills leading to participation in baseball, basketball, and football.

Ed. Note: Irene Stambler and Clare Belman managed this activity for several years; it ended in 1969.

Baseball

In 1960 Leon Brooks, who was an ardent baseball fan, organized the Bannockburn Braves, our midget softball club, which became a member of the West Bethesda Midget League. That year the team had 23 boys aged 9 to 12. Some of the equipment was donated by Samuel Schneider of the Glen Echo Hardware Store. Norton Come and Joseph Goldberg were assistant coaches.

Parents who were ardent team rooters spent many exciting evenings during the spring and the hot summers watching the games until dusk. Sometimes the tension was so great that the grownups were more involved than the youngsters in arguing over close decisions. Even though feelings ran high at times about using the best players in order to win, Leon believed that every boy on the team should get a chance to play.

Ed. Note: Raymond Jacobson succeeded Leon Brooks as coach. Games were played at the Wood Acres, Westmoreland, and Brookmont Recreation Centers on Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings. Bannockburn had a team for about 5 or 6 years.

Stacey Brooks

I recall that when my husband and I moved into our nearly-almost-just-barely-not-quite-completed house on Laverock Court in June 1952, we had all the utilities and amenities except (1) most of our furniture (still in storage) and (2) hot water. We could, of course, heat water on the range for shaving, hand-washing, and the like, but for at least a week we had to go over to Max and Pearl Bloom's house, three doors away at 6821 Laverock Court, for our showers!

Mary-Ellen Sayre

Scouting

Brownies and Girl Scouts

The first Girl Scout troop in Bannockburn was organized and ready to function shortly after the opening of school in the fall of 1950. Under the leadership of Evelyn Craig, with the help of Rosalyn Tobin, who also took the leadership course with Evelyn, and the support of parents of the girls and help from neighborhood leaders, they were off to a great start. Until about 1953 they met in the leaders' homes. There were 14 girls in the first troop -- all Intermediate Scouts (fifth, sixth, or seventh grades), with the majority from Bannockburn and some additions from the surrounding neighborhoods. The second year there was a patrol of Junior High Cadettes and a patrol of Intermediate Scouts. The first Brownie troop -- 6- and 7-year olds -- started then also, in the fall of 1951, under the leadership of Ruth Yaffee.

Leaders of Scout troops have been Bannockburn mothers who have taken a special training course to prepare themselves for helping the girls acquire the varied skills encouraged by the national organization. Such has been the rapport between Brownie leaders and their Brownies that the Bannockburn leaders often decided to "fly up" with the girls to become Girl Scout leaders when their Brownies outgrew the troop and "flew up" to become Intermediate Scouts. Fly-up ceremonies were held in the clubhouse or outdoors when the weather permitted. The earnestness of the young girls in their khaki uniforms and beanies, their obvious pride in having reached this milestone in their growing-up process, gave parents a heartwarming moment and rewarded the leaders for their efforts.

Bannockburn proved to be an ideal place for a Scout program. Beginning in 1953 the clubhouse provided a central meeting point, where most girls could assemble after school without carpooling. For a community troop it also gave the sense of being on community property, an extension of home, to be cared for and enhanced by the group, rather than meeting as guests in a church or school. The girls had the facilities to learn indoor and outdoor cooking and plenty of space for arts and crafts projects, dancing, and nature study.

For the most part, indoor Scouting activities took place in the clubhouse ballroom, but in 1957 the intermediate troop was given the exclusive use of the octagonal room for a few years. The outdoor facilities were, of course, magnificent with the valley and the canal right at hand. The Bannockburn troops spent many weekends at Rockwood, the National Girl Scout Camp, only a few miles out on MacArthur Boulevard. Pictures of an early troop taken at Rockwood were used for publicity purposes by National Headquarters and appeared in the Girl Scout magazine and in the Washington Star.

At one Brownie meeting in the early years the girls had great fun converting the clubhouse into "our Chalet," the international Girl Scout retreat in Switzerland. Each girl was attired in the uniform of a foreign country and repeated the Promise in the language of that country. They tramped through the then-extensive Bannockburn woods, identifying the flora, the leader never taking her eyes off them for fear that they might get lost or hurt in the wilds of Bannockburn.

One Brownie troop was quite international in composition, and during that period the girls learned to salute and fold the flag of all the countries represented in the troop.

In 1978, 27 years after the organization of the first Bannockburn Brownie troop, the Brownies are still meeting at the clubhouse, although there is now a combined Bannockburn-Cabin John Brownie troop with mothers from Cabin John helping in the troop. Some of the Brownie activities this year included: cleaning up the school grounds at Bannockburn Elementary School, a cookout at the Cabin John Recreation Center, a visit to the Rock Creek Planetarium, a balloon launch on the occasion of Juliette Gordon Low's birthday, and making corn husk dolls. (Mrs. Low founded the U. S. Girl Scout movement.)

The Brownies continue to become Intermediate Scouts and go on to the Cadette and Senior programs.

Teddy Bradley, Harriet Wilkins, and Helga Maybee

Cub Scouts

There was no Cub Scout den in the area open to new members when the Bannockburn pilot houses were first occupied. Having two boys of appropriate age, I called the Boy Scouts of America headquarters and found myself enrolled in a training course for new den mothers, which required all-day seminars at the old Armory in Kensington for three successive Saturdays. The list of potential cubs was supplied by the third grade teacher at Clara Barton Elementary School, and our first Bannockburn den was composed of youngsters not only from Bannockburn, but from Brookmont, Cabin John, Fairway Hills, Glen Echo, and Mohican Hills.

What nightmarish terror to have a group of 8-year olds "using" one's coat closet as a dark room during a photography project supposedly resulting in each cub's developing and printing a photo, especially under the instruction of a den mother who never even indulged in taking snapshots. Some of the monthly themes supplied by National Headquarters were fun for the boys, such as doing the dance of the Zulu warriors, wearing and using the handmade body shields and spears of their own creation. Also enjoyable was their puppet show with their own handmade puppets, cracking laugh-evoking two-line jokes. But from time to time I would find myself horrified at the thought of millions of small boys throughout the country all doing the same things at about the same time. So it was a great relief to get outdoors and roam through the woods, up and down hills, to the rocky banks of Cabin John Creek and have cookouts and other outdoor activities.

The den lasted 3 years and ended with 12 cubs in that one den. No single mother would take them all, but the following year there were two new and smaller Bannockburn dens. The activity has continued with successive den mothers, usually at the Church of the Redeemer in Fairway Hills, but for a brief period at the clubhouse.

Elinor Maclay

In 1961 the pack was still sponsored by the Church of the Redeemer, and the monthly pack meetings were held there. However, potential new cubs from Bannockburn were not being accepted into existing dens. I held an organizational meeting with parents of a dozen boys, and a new den was established. Innovations were begun of having one or two "permanent" den fathers and a fixed meeting place for weekly meetings instead of rotational meetings at a different den mother's house each week. This change helped reduce the fear and trembling with which some mothers had viewed cubscouting.

During the 3 years I was cubmaster, the pack maintained a membership of about 45 cubs. Each year there was a turnover of 12 or 15 members. New cubs were invited to join through notes sent in early September by the cubmaster to Bannockburn Elementary School for distribution to eligible boys.

Among pack activities a strong interest in softball was encouraged. Any cub who attended practice was allowed to play an inning or two on the "B" team, no matter what his level of skill. Positions on the "A" team had to be achieved through good play. Both "A" and "B" teams won most of their games.

There are four dens now in Pack 1320, with the minister of the church as packmaster.

Daniel Hamers

Boy Scouts

In the early 1950's the young boys of Bannockburn could spend time searching the creek area for tadpoles and turtles, exploring the woods back along River Road, or searching for old golf balls on the undeveloped portions of the old Bannockburn golf course. For those boys, 11 years of age or older, who wanted a more structured and varied group activity there was membership in Boy Scout Troop 444. The troop drew its membership from Cabin John, Fairway Hills, and Glen Echo as well as from Bannockburn. Its meeting places were as varied as its membership: the Church of the Redeemer in Fairway Hills, the Bannockburn clubhouse, Junior Order Hall (near the fire station) in Cabin John, and the Cabin John Recreation Center. Scoutmasters during that period were Ivan Asay of Bannockburn, Norman Nelson of Cabin John, and Andrew Thomas of Fairway Hills.

In 1966 Scout Troop 233 was organized under sponsorship of the then-new Gunton Temple Presbyterian Church on Wilson Lane (although none of the boys belonged to that church). The new troop had Charles Rippey of Bannockburn as Scoutmaster, Albert Belman of Bannockburn as troop committee chairman, and Ed Bowen of Cabin John as chairman of the review committee. The troop was composed mostly of new Scouts (tenderfeet), with a few Scouts who transferred from Troop 444 (which was then dormant) providing some senior leadership for the new troop. More than half of the boys came from Bannockburn, the remainder chiefly from Bannockburn Heights and Merrimack Park. Later, as the troop grew in size, it included a number of boys from Carderock Springs.

Scoutmaster Rippey and Assistant Scoutmaster Dan Hamers placed strong emphasis on outdoor living skills. Overnight camps were held regularly in places ranging from Prince William Forest Park to Skyline Drive, the Appalachian Trail being a favorite. The boys grew tremendously with the responsibilities of planning trips on their own into the wilds and soon learned the value of getting

food, equipment, and clothing to meet the rigors of survival on their hikes. They learned the skills of woodsmanship, fire building, lightweight backpacking, boat-hauling, and cooking. They became so proficient at woodchopping they were able to remove several large trees for the church.

There were about 25 Scouts in patrols named Eagle, Black Snake, Panther, and Sabre Tooth. A favorite patrol activity was a weekend canoe trip from Sycamore Island to Widewater, during which the adult leader gained great experience in portaging. The shortage of experienced Scouts in the troop required the tenderfoot Scouts to become patrol leaders and rapid learners in scouting.

Because of the emphasis on outdoor camping and hiking activities, the troop purchased a number of large tents and other equipment. In order to finance their purchases they sold doughnuts on Saturday mornings door-to-door throughout Bannockburn and the surrounding areas. Many families found these doughnuts a welcome addition to their breakfast menus. Each summer most of the boys spent two weeks at the Washington Area Council Scout Camp at Goshen, Virginia.

Many of the boys who started in Troop 233 rose through the ranks of scouting from tenderfoot to Star, Life, and Eagle rank. Bruce Bowen was the first Scout in Troop 233 to earn the Life rating, and Dale Belman was the first to gain the coveted Eagle rank.

In 1970 Rippey left the troop, and H. C. Spring became Scoutmaster. Subsequently the troop merged with Troop 1330, and Robert Finch became Scoutmaster of the combined troop, which voted to be called Troop 233. This troop continues to the present time to carry out its program of scouting activities under the sponsorship of the Gunton Temple Church.

Daniel Hamers and Donald Wagman

The Clubhouse Piano

In April 1961 the Friday evening performance of "The New Fronteak" was delayed because a leg had fallen off the clubhouse piano, and the piano had collapsed. This occurrence gave impetus to the drive, launched the previous year, to collect 260 Top-Value-stamp books for the acquisition of a badly needed new piano. This was Sara Katz's brilliant idea, and of course she was the one who had to carry it out. By December the required number of books had been amassed by residents and collected by a team of teenagers, and the existing Kimball upright was obtained.

The Folk Dance Group

In 1952 the Bannockburn folk dance group was started as a monthly event. Fascinated by a demonstration at a Bannockburn party of international dancing and folklore by Dave Rosenberg, a well-known Washington folk dancer, a group of Bannockburn members was motivated to start a class with Dave as its leader. In the 26 years since then, the group has built a repertoire of dances from a score of countries and has learned a good deal about the customs, costumes, and music of many lands.

Starting with a group of 20 couples, the group has maintained that size. Half of the dancers have been part of the group for more than 20 years and lasting friendships have been formed. One loyal dance couple even built a home in Bannockburn, "because we were spending so much of our time and making our friends in the community."

Some of the Bannockburn folk dancers have taken their dancing seriously enough to attend workshops and folk-dance camps and even to start dance groups of their own. They are still, however, enthusiastic participants in that "one Saturday night a month" at the clubhouse.

When Dave Rosenberg's work sent him overseas and he could no longer lead the group, his wife Nancy took over. When she, too, finally became too busy to continue, two couples in the group -- Sara and Isadore Katz and Al and I -- took over the responsibility for maintaining the repertoire and bringing new material.

Individual members of the Bannockburn folk dancers have performed in and choreographed for the Bannockburn annual shows. They have led dancing at Bannockburn Halloween parties and other get-togethers. Some have volunteered as entertainers or teachers for outside events -- Girl Scouts, charitable organizations, fund raisers. Some have volunteered to dance with patients at St. Elizabeths, the Naval Hospital, and the National Institutes of Health.

The group now has a tradition of dancing from 8:30 p.m. to midnight with one break for soft drinks, followed by a social hour of refreshments provided by the members. Members have come from outside the Bannockburn community only when vacancies were not filled by Bannockburn residents or community club members.

Marjory Weiss

The Playreading Group

In 1949 Winnie Bengelsdorf and Werner Low founded the Bannockburn Playreading Group. A great inspiration for the group was Nancy Karro, Winnie's next-door neighbor. She was a producer and director for the area little theater group, Adventure Theatre. It was hoped that the new Bannockburn Playreaders would inspire and give experience to potential members of that group.

The Playreading Group met once a month in the homes of members and read through plays, with parts assigned, covering a fairly large list of worthwhile plays over the years. Little Falls library specializes in carrying multiple copies of plays for playreading groups and will order them on request if funds are available. The group has gotten together to read Shakespeare, contemporary black theater, and almost everything in between.

An offspring of the Playreading Group was the Bannockburn Players, who planned to develop theatrical productions at the clubhouse. As June Willenz wrote in the June 1963 issue of the Bannockburn Newsletter,

the Players have found that it has been a challenge to find interesting plays and to interpret them by a reading. Often the discussion following the reading can be as exciting as the reading itself. Believe it or not, the main problem the group has faced is breaking up at a reasonable hour!

Reflecting the heterogeneity of the group, who represent a wide range of dramatic skills and background, the repertory has included such diverse plays as "The Birthday Party" by Harold Pinter, and Frederic Garcia Lorca's great poetic drama "Yerma." The theater of the absurd has been explored, as well as the modern continental drama, including Brecht, Ionesco, and Adamov. Plays by Tennessee Williams, Maxwell Anderson, Saul Bellows and O'Neill have also been read.

In 1963 the Bannockburn Players gave a reading of two plays at the clubhouse. One was Chekhov's "The Marriage Proposal," with Werner Low, Marvin Schneiderman, and Nancy Wilson. The other was Eugene O'Neill's "Hughie," with Dan Hamers, Pat Montrie, and Louis Schwartz. Nancy Karro directed, and Bernard Miller staged the dances performed during the intermission by Marianne Ross.

The most ambitious project of this group was the production, in 1964, of "At Sea" by Slawomir Mrózek. This avantgarde Polish satire was first produced in Warsaw in 1959 and proved to be one of the jewels of Polish theater. June Willenz and Allan Richardson directed the show, and Bernard Miller played the leading role. The two times it was performed at the clubhouse was the first Washington production of this gem of modern experimental theater.

The Playreading Group still gets together on an informal basis five or six times a year in an unstructured fashion. Usually the spirit strikes when

one playreader sees another at the supermarket or pool and has just read or seen a good new play. One person volunteers to get copies of the play, the other to provide the house and put a notice in the newsletter. In this unstructured but effective manner the group gets together, the few devoted stalwarts and anyone else who happens to see the notice in the newsletter. A good evening of theater and refreshments is had by all, and, if it's fun enough, by the end of the evening a play and home are picked for a meeting the following month.

Werner Low and Luba Dreyer

Unusual experiences characterized my life here. Whenever a Bannockburner wanted something done, he did it; and there were always like-minded Bannockburners ready to help. That's why I moved here. So, missing my old bridge buddies in Virginia, I inquired, and eventually found twelve potential bridge club members. I invited them over, set up eats, tables, and a friendly face. But the evening bombed. Found out later I'd invited two feuding neighbors, two life-long enemies, two beginners, and a non-bridge player who decided it would be fun to foul up the works. I persisted through the years and finally a foursome evolved, the ancestor to the fabulous foursome to be seen every summer Saturday at the pool.

Another Bannockburn institution with which I was closely associated was the Qvetch Club. Founded at the pool as a defense against a chronic and boring complainer, we one-upped each other, poolside, through the years. All complaints had to be amusing and unique. We eventually opened an extension division for deserving out-of-state complainers, and awarded prizes for excellence at the annual Qvetch Club Banquet.

Other special Hamers involvements were winter swimming for the Bannockburn Swim Team, instituted by Dan and evidenced by shifts of icicle-haired maidens and boys being carpooled by parents to and from American University, right in the middle of the dinner hour; and Dan's below-zero, snow up-to-your-chin campouts with the Boy Scouts.

And lastly, there was the conversion of the old office on the top floor of the clubhouse into a painting atelier for the serious painters, giving the final touch to what I consider the wonderful atmosphere that is Bannockburn.

Sylvia Hamers

And More Activities

In addition to the annual events, activities, and groups previously described, many others deserve to be mentioned. Most were sponsored by the Bannockburn Community Club (BCC) and took place at the clubhouse; others were conducted either at the clubhouse or in private homes.

Spring Show Party. The show itself always gets the limelight -- and deservedly, but let's not forget the party-dance that adds so much enjoyment to the Friday and Saturday night performances. Running the party takes dozens of volunteers under the leadership of the hardworking coordinator who has the great responsibility of bringing it all together: the refreshments and setups, the chairs and tables, the food-serving and bartending, the decorations, the flyers, the parking, the live or recorded music for dancing, the cleanup. Over the years there has been a succession of party managers; Wanda Maltz and Anne Janney have undertaken this job more than once. This annual party originated in May of 1953, when the first spring dance was held at the clubhouse.

Teen Activities. The clubhouse has been used intermittently as a center for teen activities. In early 1957, under the sponsorship of a Bannockburn-Merrimack Park committee and the county's recreation department, two groups were started (one for grades 7 and 8, the other for grades 9 to 12), with activities centering around a "drop in" every Saturday afternoon. In 1960 BCC sponsored an abridged production of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, with a cast of 27 Bannockburn teenagers under Nancy Karro's direction. The producer was Maurice (Herb) Schwartz. Gloria Schwartz and Ann Cohen did the choreography, and Eugene Dreyer was musical director. A matinee and an evening performance were given at the Bannockburn Elementary School early in June. Maurice Schwartz also conducted a number of youth tours to points of interest in the Washington area.

The year 1968 saw the opening of a coffee house, planned and run by teenagers. Two years later the basement of the clubhouse was furnished to serve as "The Test Tube," where, for a while, teens got together evenings to talk, listen to music, view films, or play pool. Now and then there have been dance classes and dances for the youngsters, but organized teenage activities have not had a continuing existence in Bannockburn, and at present there is no such program in the community.

Arts and Crafts Fair. BCC first sponsored this activity in 1972 to raise money for the clubhouse and let friends and neighbors see what their friends and neighbors were up to, artistically and craftily. Similar fairs were held in the four following years, the one in 1975 being cosponsored by the Bannockburn Nursery School. A wide range of artistic creations was displayed at various fairs: paintings, sculptures, pottery, copper enameled items, jewelry, stitchery items, and weavings. /Based on material supplied by Janice Earle./

Yard Sale. The annual spring yard sales, begun in 1976, have repaid the considerable amount of time and effort put into them by producing large sums of

money for both BCC and the nursery school. Neighbors have the pleasure of both getting rid of stored-up "junk" and triumphantly returning home with precious "finds" at bargain prices. They bake cakes and cookies for one another to enjoy and exchange plants and seedlings. Huge quantities of books change hands. This profitable fundraiser is bound to continue.

Etcetera. There are, or were, at least 20 other activities or groups that should be mentioned if only to indicate further the range and scope of areas of interest to Bannockburners.

Persons interested in dance have had a number of choices in addition to the folk dance group described earlier. For children there have been modern dancing and classes in classical ballet; adults could choose among creative, square, and ballroom dancing.

Bridge, chess, and table tennis were available at various times in the past, and there were movies at the clubhouse, including the "Civilization" series of 1971, and a story-telling hour for children. For a time in the 1950's there was a Valentine's Party at the clubhouse, complete with puppet show.

Several groups were formed with practical aims, such as the Homemakers Club and a sewing class for teens, conducted by Joyce Epps in 1975. In the early years, when everyone was frantically planting trees and shrubs, a very active garden group heard talks by horticultural experts, and BCC sponsored bulk purchases of garden supplies for many years.

In the fifties and sixties Bannockburn had a Democratic Women's Club and a League of Women Voters unit. Forums were held at the clubhouse, and neighbors met in one another's homes to discuss Great Books and Great Decisions. Around 1960 a class in French conversation was conducted by Rosanne Weil-Malherbe. A meditation series took place at the clubhouse in 1972, and a few concerts and recitals have been performed at various times.

For a couple of summers in the early seventies a creative arts program for children, called "Odyssey," took place at the clubhouse; in recent years there has been a class in handicrafts called "Everything Soup."

There have been occasional bursts of interest in potluck dinners at the clubhouse. The latest burst, still continuing, began with potlucks at the pool in the summer of 1977.

In recent years adult interest has centered on physical fitness. BCC sponsored an exercise class in April 1977, which met one evening a week for 8 weeks. In 1976-77 the Diet Workshop, for males and females who thought there was too much to them, met at the clubhouse after moving from St. Andrew's Methodist Church. Beatrice Smeltzer helped organize and conduct this workshop.

Not included in this list, gleaned from going over past issues of the newsletter and hearing about activities from organizers or participants, are two I would like to mention. One is the one I went to one evening when my kids were small; they asked me to play with them, and I told them I couldn't because I had to go to a meeting on how to be a better parent. Another is the one I'm not sure ever got organized, though it might have been useful in Bannockburn: a "Recluse Group" for people who just want to be by themselves.

Philip Janus