

December 2017

Vol. 47, Issue 8

Kings Park West Civic Association

Happy Holidays!

The Board and I extend our thanks to the membership who gave of their time and talents to the community this past year.

Fall is typically the busiest time for the Civic Association. The 2018 membership drive took place in October; joining KPWCA is important, as members are the foundation of our Association. Many volunteers continue to work diligently on this campaign – thank you block captains, who administered the door-to-door appeal, to the Membership Committee, who maintain the Association database, to the Treasurer, who maintains our banking record deposits, and to our Membership Chair who oversees everything. Many thanks for an awesome job!

Unfortunately, two weekends of rain led to the cancellation of our Annual Halloween Festival. But we have high hopes for next year. Many thanks to Keith Jodoin for volunteering to lead this festival in 2017 and beyond!

Our Fall Dumpster Day, which is open to Association members, was held at Lakeview Pool on Saturday, November 4th. True to form, we had many folks show up to discard unwanted household items, as two dumpsters were filled. Thanks to Mary Hovland, Barbara Murillo and Patti Dickerson, who managed the event, and thanks to Lakeview Pool for the continued use of their parking lot for this event! A reminder that once the gate to the pool parking lot is closed, the event is over. A heavy piece of furniture was left to the side of one of the dumpsters after the event was over, and this created extra work for several volunteers to take it to the County transfer station. We look forward to our Spring Dumpster Day.

We are continuing to solicit a volunteer (or two) to oversee the Neighborhood Watch Program. Please contact me at president@kpwca.org if you would like to volunteer, or if you have any suggestions.

Remember – the Holiday Decorating Committee will be judging the house decorating contest during the weekend of December 16th. Please light up your holiday displays.

Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season!

Sincerely, Jeanmarie Roberson

Community Calendar	
Braddock District Council.....	Dec 13
KPWCA Board Meeting.....	Dec 19
Winter Begins.....	Dec 21
Christmas.....	Dec 25
New Year's Eve.....	Dec 31
New Year's Day.....	Jan 1
Citizen Advisory Council.....	Jan 2
Herald Deadline.....	Jan 3
Braddock District Council.....	Jan 10
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.....	Jan 15
KPWCA Board Meeting.....	Jan 16
Herald Delivery.....	Jan 20

KINGS PARK WEST CIVIC ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 7114, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7114

www.kpwca.org

OFFICERS

President	Jeanmarie Roberson	703-425-1286
Vice-President	Steve McCarty	703-978-0222
Secretary	Frank Cumberland	703-426-2868
Treasurer	Jim Mays	703-978-0317
Members-At-Large	Adrienne Barna	703-323-0518
	Mary Crowder	703-239-2581
	Jonathan Reiser	571-423-8030

COMMITTEES

B.A.G.G. **Vacant**

Community Support Services

Consumer Affairs	Mary Hovland	703-946-1775
Dumpster Day	Mary Hovland	703-946-1775
GMU Student Liaison	Vacant	
Neighbor Assist	Bruce Wallachy	703-401-0275
Welcoming	Melissa Morgan:	welcome@kpwca.org
Zoning, Code, Safety	Jackie Agnew	703-862-8471

Communications

Herald Newsletter:

Display Editor	Leah Larson-Taylor	703-283-0208
Communications Editor	Samantha Juni	703-395-4049
Herald Advertising	Samantha Juni	703-395-4049
Herald Classifieds	Ejona Lika	classified@kpwca.org
Signboards	Adrienne Barna	703-323-0518
Web Admin	Kathy Shifflett	website@kpwca.org
Membership	Patti Dickerson	membership@kpwca.org
NW Coord.	Tara Mooney	tarajmooney@yahoo.com
Parks & Lakes	Sarah Lennon	703-978-5608
Invasive Species	Greg Sykes	703-426-8246
Signs, St.s, Sidewalks	Jeff Root	703-323-4438

Special Activities

Easter Egg Hunt	Pack 1967	
Halloween Festival	Jeanmarie Roberson	703-425-1286
	Keith Jodoin	kjodoin@gmail.com
Scholarships	Gayle Ostrom	703-323-0206

Email Addresses for KPWCA Inc.

OFFICERS

President	President@kpwca.org
Treasurer	Treasurer@kpwca.org

COMMITTEES

Membership	Membership@kpwca.org
Welcome Coordinator	Welcome@kpwca.org
Consumer Affairs	Consumer@kpwca.org
Zoning	Zoning@kpwca.org
B.A.G.G.	BAGG@kpwca.org
Parks & Lakes	Parks@kpwca.org
Signs, St.s, Sidewalks	St.s@kpwca.org
Neighborhood Watch	Watch@kpwca.org
Scholarships	Scholarships@kpwca.org
Neighbor Assistance	NeighborAssist@kpwca.org

HERALD STAFF

Editor	Editor@kpwca.org
Classifieds	Classified@kpwca.org

Advertising See Below

General Information

Community Association	Info@kpwca.org
	KPWHO@kpwca.org

How Do I Advertise in The Herald?

CLASSIFIEDS: KPWCA Newsletter classified advertisements for the January 20th issue must be received no later than January 3rd by Ejona Lika, 9810 Bronte Drive, Fairfax, VA 22032, or email classified@kpwca.org. Please print clearly, and include payment to KPWCA. Furnish your name, address, and phone number. Rates: KPWCA members, \$2 for each 15 words; nonmembers, \$5 first 25 words, plus \$3 for each additional 15 words. Found items listed free.

ADVERTISEMENTS: KPWCA Newsletter Advertisements are received by Samantha Juni; please email editor@kpwca.org. Contact Samantha for rates.

How Do I Get My News in The Herald?

The easiest way to get your news items in The Herald is to e-mail the editor at editor@kpwca.org. We invite items on neighborhood schools, churches, organizations, and other noteworthy neighborhood news. News items and letters will be published if deemed suitable and as space permits. We reserve the right to edit any item submitted to The Herald. Acceptance of news items does not constitute endorsement by KPWCA.

How Do I Join the Kings Park West Civic Association?

Send your name, address, and phone number, along with a check for \$20.00, to KPWCA, P.O. Box 7114, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7114. Members receive the Community Directory and support from community programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Scholarship Awards, community social activities, Parks & Lakes Clean-up, and a free subscription to The Herald. Alternatively, go to www.kpwca.org and pay using PayPal.

The Herald

Published eight times yearly by the KPWCA.

NEXT DEADLINE is January 3, 2018

for delivery on January 20, 2018

Note: Acceptance of articles and advertising does not constitute endorsement by KPWCA, nor liability for products or services advertised in its publications.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: If you are moving out of the neighborhood and want to keep in touch with what's happening, gets a subscription. Send \$20 per year to:

KINGS PARK WEST CIVIC ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 7114, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7114.

Volunteer Opportunities

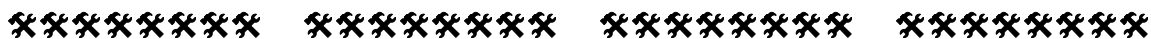
Parks & Lakes Committee: We are looking for 3-5 motivated members to help plan and organize twice-a-year park/lake clean-ups. *A few hours per month in the months leading up to the April and October clean-ups.* Ideas to make the clean-ups fun and inviting are welcomed! Please contact Sarah Lennon at parks@kpwca.org and/or sarahgilelennon@gmail.com.

B.A.G.G. Coordinator: *1-2 hours per month.* Coordinates annual contract for common area maintenance, coordinates purchase/delivery of mulch for common areas, coordinates common area clean ups with volunteers, monitors the KPW subdivision signs and signboards for maintenance and arranges for repairs. Please contact Jeanmarie at president@kpwca.org.

Neighbor Assist Volunteers: *As needed.* Looking for friendly callers (a great way to volunteer without having to leave your home), computer experts to provide IT assistance, and handyman volunteers. Contact Bruce Wallachy at wallbdc@gmail.com or call 703-401-0275.

Road Raiders, *1/2 hour each month.* Performs common area clean-up around neighborhood once per month early Saturday mornings. Please contact Sarah Lennon at sarahgilelennon@gmail.com.

Invasive Management Area, *~3 hours a few times per year.* Details found at <http://www.grsykes.com/main.php?page=32>. Send an e-mail to greg@grsykes.com and ask to be on the volunteer distribution list.



Neighbor Assist in Kings Park West

The holiday season is almost upon us. Be careful about food spoilage – you would not want someone to get sick on spoiled food. That would spoil your holiday, and theirs. Food, especially meats, become breeding grounds when sitting too long on buffets. Do not let the food sit for more than two hours without having a chafing dish or sterno to keep it at 135 degrees. Or, it might be easier to put your food in the refrigerator to chill it. You can always retrieve it from the refrigerator, if needed.

Please continue to spread the word about our free handyman services. We can repair those nagging problems, or at the very least, provide advice on what should be done, if the requested job is larger than we can take on.

We ask that those in KPW who can help others with leaf or snow removal to please let us know, as we have senior neighbors who need help. This is a paid program; the requester and provider will negotiate the charge. We maintain a list of providers, and when a resident requests this service, we send them the list of providers to call. If you are interested in providing snow or leaf removal, or if you need assistance with this, please call (703) 401-0275, or email NeighborAssist@kpwca.org.

While the handyman service is community-wide, there are many KPW residents who live near and assist older residents in more ways than the handyman service does. We thank you for being a good KPW neighbor. Together, we can continue to provide services that make our community better and entice others to move here.

Finally, we wish you all a wonderful holiday season. Happy New Year!

REAL ESTATE CORNER

by Mary and Cathy



Spring is considered the peak home-shopping season since most families want to move when the kids are out of school. Yet it actually pays to list in the winter, when buyers tend to have more urgency: A study by online brokerage Redfin found that average sellers net more "above-asking" offers during the months of December, January, February, and March than they do from June through November, even in cold-weather cities like Boston and Chicago. And homes listed in winter sold faster than those posted in spring.

Reviewing home sale statistics in Kings Park West for the past three years reveals that December, January, February and March account for more than a third of the months that boasted homes sales with lower than average days on market (34 days for Kings Park West).

So if you are looking for a quick sale, consider preparing your home for market now, and start packing!



Month	Average DOM	Month	Average DOM
Feb-17	4.5	Oct-16	20.7
Apr-16	5.3	Jun-16	20.8
Mar-16	6.0	Jul-15	20.9
May-17	7.9	Nov-15	21.3
Apr-17	8.5	Dec-15	21.6
Feb-16	11.0	Jan-17	22.5
Oct-17	12.0	Aug-15	22.9
Dec-16	14.0	Jul-17	23.1
Apr-15	14.3	Nov-16	24.4
May-16	15.0	Feb-15	26.8
Jun-17	15.3	Dec-14	27.3
Jul-16	15.4	Mar-17	27.6
Aug-16	17.8	Sep-15	28.3
Jan-16	18.7	Jun-15	29.4
May-15	20.1		

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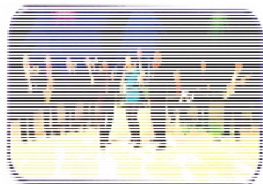
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Tower House Valentine Concert ~ Sunday, February 11, 2018, 6:00 p.m.

Our popular Valentine program features the dynamic Tower House band presenting dance music from the '60's through the '80's, along with delicious food in a cabaret setting. A perfect way to celebrate Valentine's Day!



"Gloria" by John Rutter ~ Sunday, April 15, 2018, 10:15 a.m.

The Good Shepherd Senior Choir, along with organ and brass, will perform Rutter's *Gloria*, a lively setting of the Gloria text and one of the most popular compositions by this well-known composer. *Gloria* will be integrated into the Church Service to enhance the liturgy. There is **no admission charge**.



Patagonia Winds ~ Sunday, May 13, 2018, 6:00 p.m.

Now in its seventh season, this dynamic wind quintet is known for its innovative programming featuring standard chamber repertoire as well as music by contemporary composers. Our special Mother's Day concert will be one that the whole family can enjoy!

Season tickets: You can buy **season tickets** now at a discounted rate of \$75 adult (\$40 student) www.cogs.brownpapertickets.com. **Single ticket sales** at \$30 adult (\$15 student) will be available at the door and online. www.good-shepherd.net

The Church of the Good Shepherd



9350 Braddock Road
Burke, VA 22015
703-323-5400

GMU Food Pantry

By Mary Crowder

(703) 239-2581 Mary.Crowder@verizon.net

Kings Park West has been contributing to the food pantry at George Mason University since February. To date, we have contributed 885 pounds of food and toiletry items. In February, there were 32 students in need of the pantry, and today, there are 72. They are screened for need, and may pick up 25 pounds of supplies per week. "Mason's Patriot Pantry works to mitigate the challenges that students with food insecurity and hunger at George Mason University face."

They need non-perishable food, hygiene products, and school supplies. Some suggestions are pasta (except for ramen), microwavable meals, granola bars, cereals, nuts, and almond and soy milk. I have a bin on my front porch that I check daily, and I deliver at least once a month.

Thank you for your generosity.

The Herald's List

by Mary Hovland and Cathy DeLoach

House Cleaning Recommendations

Have you checked out the Herald's List recently? One of your neighbors is looking for recommendations for house cleaning services. If you have a service that you like, please post it to the Facebook page!

Many families who don't use house cleaners year-round seek out these services for a sparkly home for the upcoming holiday season. Others like to have a service do a thorough "top to bottom" prior to moving into a new home, or right after moving out. Whatever the reason, a good home cleaning service provider is a handy resource to have available. Please share your recommendations!



The Kings Park West Herald's List Facebook Page is an interactive community resource for KPW residents. Requests and recommendations come in daily, and offers searchability and immediate access to recommendations. Post your own requests or recommendations.

www.facebook.com/groups/HeraldsList



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Deer Browsing Impacts at a Glance

By Greg Sykes (greg@grsykes.com)



Note: To view this image in color, please visit http://www.grsykes.com/pdf/eco-articles/79b_2017-12.pdf.

Aside from eating garden plants, some people wondered what kind of impact large deer populations have on the environment. Take a moment to look at the above photograph of Pohick Stream Valley Park (part of the Royal Lake watershed) near the Dundalk Street entrance. One might see a natural forest displaying beautiful autumn colors. However, the turning leaf hues help to illustrate this woodland's maladies. Starting with the understory, all of the yellow shrubs are common spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) – a good native, but in far greater abundance than expected. The green bushes consist of American holly (*Ilex opaca*) – another over-represented regional native, hobblebush (*Viburnum lantanoides*) – native to western Virginia, but introduced to Fairfax County, and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) – a non-native invasive species from Asia. Invasive Management Area (IMA) volunteers eradicated two other alien shrubs from here several years earlier: winged burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) and Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*). The yellowing grass along the trail on the left is Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*). Red maples (*Acer rubrum*) dominate the upper canopy, supplemented by tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). These native trees are early succession species, as this area was farmland fifty years ago or so.

All of these plants share one commonality: white-tailed deer do not like eating them! Heavy deer activity reduces plant biodiversity and often favors non-native invasive weeds. While oak trees – one of the climax trees in old growth Northern Virginia forests – are near this site, they are either mature trees or seedlings. Deer soon eat and kill these seedlings, resulting in an insufficient number of young oaks ready to replace the old ones when they die.

What started off looking like a pretty landscape picture now looks pretty sad. There it is – deer over-browsing spotted at a glance!

See the full article by scanning the QR code with your smart phone or go to: http://www.grsykes.com/pdf/eco-articles/79b_2017-12.pdf



* * * * *

Pack 1967 News

This fall featured two great adventures for the boys of Pack 1967. In October, our pack attended the National Capital Area Council's Fall Cub Scout EXPO at Camp Snyder in Haymarket. And during election week in November, the older members of the pack took advantage of a day out of school to hike Old Rag Mountain.

The scouts' experience at Camp Snyder included practicing their aim at the BB gun, sling-shot, and archery ranges. They also tested their strength, as well as their fear of heights, by climbing the rock wall. They talked with scouts all over the world as part of the Jamboree-on-the-Air, and made their own emblems at the leatherworking station. The pack capped off the day with a family campout at Camp Snyder, complete with a campfire and s'mores.

Hiking Old Rag was a new experience for most of the thirteen boys who participated this year. Although the weather forecast did not look promising, the day ended up being quite pleasant. The boys (and dads and moms!) were most challenged by the rock scramble during the four miles up, but all were rewarded with a lunch break viewing the beautiful vista at the summit. The five miles down was a race to beat the sunset, but the exhausted group was proud of their accomplishment.

Pack 1967 meets monthly, generally on the second Wednesday evening of the month. Individual dens (boys of the same age) meet about twice a month on a selected day to work on achievements, participate in projects, and have fun together. If you have a child in grades K-5 and would like more information about joining our pack, please email us at CubScout.Pack.1967@gmail.com.



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Get Off the Couch

A roundup of family friendly weekend events around the region...

* If you know of any public annual Chanukah celebrations, I'd love to include that information in this column. Thanks! *

November 10 - January 7, 2018**Winter Walk of Lights at Meadowlark Gardens**

9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Every year between Thanksgiving until just after New Year's Day, the garden is transformed into a half-mile, animated light show. Tickets/Info: www.novaparks.com/events/winter-walk-of-lights. 5:30-10 pm, Timed tickets required.

November 22 - January 7, 2018**Bull Run Festival of Lights**

Experience 2.5 miles illuminated by holiday light displays. Afterwards, visit the holiday village for rides and refreshments. Cost: \$20-25. Monday-Thursday, 5:30-9:30 pm; Friday-Sunday and holidays, 5:30-10 pm. www.novaparks.com/events/bull-run-festival-of-lights.

November 24 - January 1, 2018**Zoo Lights at The National Zoo**

More than half a million lights illuminate the National Zoo during this popular annual event. Stroll around and check out nocturnal residents, take a carousel ride, or take a slide down the tubing hill. Admission to the zoo is *FREE*, but there is a charge for activities. 5-9 pm. nationalzoo.si.edu/events/zoolights

December 9 - 10**17th Annual Walk – Ancient Streets of Bethlehem**

A replica of the famous scene will be displayed for the 17th consecutive year at Parkwood Baptist Church, 8726 Braddock Road, Annandale. "Bethlehem Walk" is free and provides guided tours 3-7 pm featuring costumed reenactors, a live nativity scene including animals, Christmas music performances, crafts and story-telling for children, and refreshments. Free parking is available. www.Parkwood.org/Bethlehem

December 15-16**Christmas Illumination at Mount Vernon Estate**

Enjoy an evening of holiday-themed fireworks and special programs: watch colonial artisans make chocolate, meet reenactors from the First Virginia Regiment, enjoy cider by a bonfire, and learn 18th century dance moves from costumed guides. 5:30-9 pm. www.mountvernon.org/

December 24**The Water-Skiing Santa**

Old Town Alexandria. This annual event features a water-skiing Santa, flying elves, a jet-skiing Grinch, and Frosty the Snowman performing on the Potomac River. 1 pm. www.tripsavvy.com/water-skiing-santa-washington-dc-1038629

December 27-29**Virginia Ballet Company and School Presents: "The Nutcracker"**

A magical holiday experience and tradition since 1950. This wonderful production features many dancers who

are KPW residents. Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center, NVCC, Annandale. Order tickets \$20-30 online at vaballet.org/nutcracker/

December 31**11th Annual Rocknoceros New Year**

Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Avenue E., Vienna. Rocknoceros is three guys: Coach, Williebob, and Boogie Bennie, who have been making award-winning music together since 2005. Cost: \$10 per person. 11 am. www.jamminjava.com/event/1552009-11th-annual-rocknoceros-new-vienna/

December 31

First Nights and family-friendly events celebrating the New Year are held in Alexandria, Falls Church, Winchester, and Fredericksburg. Enjoy live music and entertainment by a wide variety of local performers and fireworks at some of the events. For all the details: www.tripsavvy.com/washington-dc-family-friendly-new-years-eve-events-1039051

January 2018

January is a great time to visit the many outdoor ice skating rinks in the area. Here are a few options:

Sculpture Garden Ice Rink - Perhaps the oldest and most popular rink in the area. Admission \$6-7, skate rental \$3.

Tyson's Corner Center Ice Rink - Right outside the Tyson Corner mall. Admission \$9-10, skate rental \$6.

Harris Pavilion - This is a covered rink located near the Manassas VRE station. Admission \$7-8, skate rental \$5, all day open skate.

Georgetown's Washington Harbor - DC's largest outdoor rink. Admission \$9-10, skate rental \$6.

Reston Town Center Ice Rink, www.restontowncenter.com/amenities/ice-skating/

Pentagon Row Ice Rink, www.pentagonrowskating.com/

Family Friendly Activities Happening at Mason:

Patriot Center: www.eaglebankarena.com/
Men's and Women's Basketball: gomason.com

Center for the Arts: www.cfa.gmu.edu
December 16: Fairfax Symphony Orchestra: *The Nutcracker*

December 17: Vienna Boys Choir

December 20-21: *Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker*

Men's and Women's Basketball and Swimming & Diving: gomason.com



Christmas Bird Count

By Greg Sykes (greg@grsykes.com)

Citizen scientists are laypeople who contribute to science by participating in projects that generate useful data. One way folks help the scientific community is through the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Centuries earlier, this event started as hunting expeditions – coinciding with Christmastime – where tallies of the day’s catch were registered. Luckily, people recognized the counterproductive impact of killing the cherished subjects, so a parallel count began, switching to scoring live field observations by 1900.

These days, a typical CBC scenario falls within a 15-mile wide circle. That area is further divided into sectors where an experienced birder leads a party around a pre-established patrol route. Novices are paired with knowledgeable birders. Party members count the bird species and quantities (or estimates within a flock) as they tour their designated subsection. Birds observed or heard, when doubling back on a trail, are not counted unless the species is new to the day’s list. Parties might split up to cover more ground, but at least one skilled birder is in each subgroup. Some people participate by documenting the species visiting a birdfeeder, though this method creates a bias for seed and/or mealworm-eating birds and could omit other avian members such as scavengers and waterfowl. All observations are within a day, from midnight to midnight, on a specific date, rain or shine. CBC data are used to analyze trends and environmental wellbeing.

Folks should never take any species for granted regardless of how common it currently appears. For example, a former D.C. area resident, the passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*), numbered over four billion birds. With twenty percent of all North American birds being passenger pigeons, this species was the most abundant bird on the continent. Second only to humans, these doves influenced their environment more than any other single animal species. However, overhunting and habitat destruction pummeled the massive passenger pigeon population to extinction within several decades.

Population surveys helped scientists spot and stop other threats to birds. For instance, discovering the link between DDT, bioaccumulation, and severe declines in top predatory birds led to this pesticide’s ban. The following years saw hawks, eagles, pelicans, and other meat-eating birds slowly recover. Population monitoring is a tool that scientists use to gauge new, emerging threats, such as climate change, manmade obstacles (e.g., glassy skyscrapers and wind turbines) impeding migration, and non-native invasive species overtaking natural areas. Bird counts also help biologists see the positive impacts of habitat restoration projects and safer architectural designs. True to the metaphor, bird populations are a “canary in the coalmine” for environmental health.



Figure 1. This song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia melodia*), perched on a swamp rose (*Rosa palustris*) branch, is a common species that a novice might mistake for any of the other “little brown birds.” With practice, folks learn to distinguish the different species and appreciate the niches filled by the particular birds.

The best way to learn bird identification is by gaining field experience and going on bird walks. A knowledgeable birder, a naturalist, or even an ornithologist leads these treks. Find out how to identify different species by their appearance, movement, behavior, and calls. Organized bird walks are held at several local parks. Here is the scoop on two free, regularly scheduled walks:

- Friends of Dyke Marsh host bird walks every Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m., starting from the Belle Haven picnic area. www.fodm.org/
- Huntley Meadows Park occurs every Monday morning, beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the winter and 7:00 a.m. April through October. Meet at the main entrance. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/birdwalk.htm

A big “thank you” goes to Larry Cartwright – compiler of the Washington, D.C., CBC – for sharing details about the count. Contact him at prowarbler@verizon.net, (703) 941-3142 (home), or (571) 359-2395 (cell), for more information, checklists, or about joining a December 16, 2017, CBC party (which includes the Dyke Marsh sector – their 75th consecutive year) or conducting a birdfeeder survey. For other regional 2017 CBC sectors, dates, and the compilers’ contact details, see page 3 of www.nvabc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/NVBC-2017-Nov-Siskin_final-9-Oct-2017.pdf.



Figure 2. The Smithsonian Museum of Natural History houses the taxidermy mount of Martha, the world’s last passenger pigeon, who died in 1914.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year!

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For further reading and links to additional resources, see the full article by scanning the QR code with your smart phone or go to: http://www.grsykes.com/pdf/eco-articles/79a_2017-12.pdf



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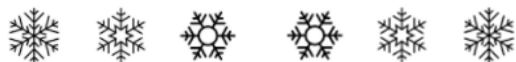
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THE GARDEN CORNER

By Charlie Boring

My wife and I recently returned from a trip to Italy. The purpose of the trip, aside from visiting relatives and friends, was to attend an Italian wedding. Italian weddings are a great experience, but you might be asking yourself, “What does that have to do with gardening?”

As you are probably aware, plants depend upon fertile soil, sunlight, water, and an appropriate temperature to support their growth. Northern Italy has an abundance of all of these elements, such that – and I am exaggerating a bit – if you were to accidentally drop your keys on the ground, they would probably grow into a thriving key plant.

As luck would have it, the wedding reception was held at an agriturismo, or agritourism, restaurant in the low mountains near Vicenza. What is agritourism? In Italy, it is a farm stay that serves local cuisine made from local and/or proprietary produce guaranteed to be organic. This particular restaurant served locally grown beef, pork, chicken, guinea hen, and duck, as the meats of choice for the wedding, and a variety of vegetables grown on their property or procured from local, organic certified growers. Italy is serious about organic certification, and goes to great lengths to ensure that growers and restaurants meet the standards for organic produce.

One of the dishes served at the wedding reception for which this area is noted was called “baccala` alla Vicentina,” served with polenta. This dish is very popular – it is salt-preserved cod fish prepared in a white sauce and served over a substitute for bread made from corn meal. If you get the opportunity, please give it a try. You will not be sorry.

After eating much more than I should have eaten, I took a stroll around the restaurant property, which was located on the side of the mountain. Landscaping near the restaurant entrance, both front and rear, included many of the used spices such as rosemary, sage, mint and others. The chef had these handily available, much as my grandmother did when she grew them in her kitchen garden.

I strolled across a large outdoor patio with seating that allowed dining with a great view of the city of Vicenza, and found myself looking at one of the secrets of the restaurant, a large grouping of raised garden beds in which some of the staples of Italian cuisine were growing. Most were equipped with plastic row covers that would extend the growing season in the spring and fall. A large compost pile was conveniently situated near the beds to make it easier to keep the soil fertile throughout the year. I saw several types of greens and lettuce, carrots, radishes, tomatoes, onions, garlic, and much more. I had a strange urge to get my little garden in Kings Park West ready to plant my garlic.

So, what did I take away from this exposure to Italian agritourism? I saw that organic gardening can produce some great produce that can be turned into some great eats, if you learn the techniques.

In order to grow your garden organically, you need to: 1) use organic fertilizers, which you can purchase or produce yourself through composting (here is one site that provides some helpful information: porch.com/advice/diy-organic-fertilizer-garden-2/; and 2) use organic methods to control pests (here is a site with some ideas: www.globalhealingcenter.com/natural-health/organic-pesticides/). If you want to be even more organic, you can also water using rainwater collected from your roof in your very own rain barrels.

So, when I arrived home, I planted my garlic. It is now spouting and will have a head-start when Spring arrives. I am thinking about spaghetti with oil, garlic and chilis!



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