

The Stonewall GAZETTE

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Spotsylvania County, VA



HOLIDAY WRAPUP

I hope that everyone's Holidays were

enjoyable, most wishes were granted, time was spent with the ones you love, and much food was consumed—my idea of a great holiday! Mine turned out well, though I must admit to being quite the Scrooge until just before Christmas. I'm not the type to plan the holiday out, shopping throughout the year, stockpiling gifts bought smartly at sales and clearances. No, I'm the type that has to be in the Christmas mood before I can do anything—unfortunately, this usually happens only a few days before Christmas, so that's when I can be found buzzing all over town in search of the perfect gift. Not a great system, but it's worked for so long I'm afraid to try anything else!

My only complaint about Christmas this year (you know there'd be at least one, didn't you?) is that I didn't get the one big gift on my personal wish list. That shiny red VW convertible bug is STILL sitting at a house other than my own on Stonewall Lane. Grrr! I've resigned myself to hoping wistfully that maybe next time

New Year's was exciting! As the midnight hour tolled, we raced outside to bang pots and pans together to ring in the New Year. The Ziemskis joined in,

and a houseful of revelers on Halleck TRIED to make more noise than us; all I'll say is that they made a good effort!



RAILS TO TRAILS



Gary's column last month briefly mentioned a possible "Rails to Trails" project being started in this area on the old Fredericksburg rail lines. Several interesting calls were received on this issue; one caller who would be directly affected by the trail was not happy with the idea but asked not to be identified. Another, Mr. O'Toole (the person whose house was mentioned in the article), offered quite helpful background information on the issue. And, if you've been reading the newspapers lately, the issue is alive and pushing forward (though not necessarily in our backyards). During the next few months, I will update you as events unfold. I'm also interested in your ideas on this controversial issue, so please don't hesitate to drop me a note or give me a call.

CAMP SWAMPY (STONEWALL)

So, is anyone else sick yet of the swamps in their yards? Seems that the rain



has lessened up for a while, but I've made a resolution that I will wait until after a downpour to examine the property around the next house I ever think of buying.

I've walked around this neighborhood after these rains (after I moved in, of course) only to find that I wasn't the only one with the swamp problem. Many yards had huge standing puddles or, in some cases, FLOWING RIVERS of water trailing through their front or back yards. I suppose your own personal river would be nice if you have irrigation needs or were into trout-farming, but I think this would be a nuisance. Isn't all this standing water a preventable condition? If you have come up with any creative solutions to this problem on your own property, please let us know so that we can share them with the neighborhood.

NEW RESIDENT OF STONEWALL ESTATES

Linda and Glenn Wilson of 611 Stonewall welcomed a baby girl, Holly LaDonna, into their family at 4:15 p.m. on December 23, 1992—8 lbs., 8 oz., and 21 in. Holly joins big brothers Matthew, 9, and Russell, 3, at home. The Wilsons have lived in the neighborhood for three years.



first." This celebration lasts from the first day after Christmas through the first day of the New Year. A kinara (candelabrum) holds seven candles—each night a new candle is lit. Each candle represents one of the seven Kwanzaa principles, which are: unity; self-determination; collective work and responsibility; cooperative economics; purpose; creativity; and faith. Each night, after fasting all day, families and friends gather to light the candles, discuss the Kwanzaa principles, share traditional meals, exchange homemade gifts, and regale each other with stories passed down through their ancestors.

Christmas, which is celebrated on December 25, is a combination pagan/religious celebration commemorating the winter solstice and the birth of Jesus Christ, but is now as secular as any other holiday. Most families celebrate Christmas with a decorated tree, gift-giving, traditional foods, lots of visiting with friends and relatives, singing carols, and sharing stories and memories.



I could go on and on with different celebrations, but the obvious thing about the holidays I wrote about is not so much how different these celebrations are, but how similar: they all involve getting together with the people you love, singing/chanting songs or prayers, and sharing good meals and memories. It's a time of family, togetherness, unity, and faith.

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season (in whatever way you wish to celebrate it)!

(Do you (adults and kids) have any special childhood memories about this season? If so, we'd love to hear about them and hope you'd like to share them with the readers of the Gazette. Just place your submission in my paperbox or on my porch.)

BAYLESS FAMILY MOVES TO STONEWALL ESTATES

Happy Holidays! We are the Bayless family—Jim, Julie, and Jennifer. Julie and I are thirtysomethings and Jennifer just turned 5 on November 12. We moved into the neighborhood in October. This will be our first opportunity to live in Virginia and we are looking forward to it. We moved to this area after a two-year stay in Bombay, India. Before that, we lived in England, Berlin, Hawaii, and Japan.

I work for the Department of State and Julie recently began selling Avon. Jennifer is in pre-school at Minnieland. I enjoy sports of all types. Julie enjoys arts and crafts.

Like Ruth, we would be interested in getting together with and meeting our neighbors.

- Jim Bayless
703 Stonewall Lane

RAILROAD THROUGH STONEWALL ESTATES



I just suffered through a rather traumatic experience. I guess you could say it was just another episode in my passage from childhood, but the toy trains, a passion in my younger years, finally went into boxes. Oh sure, I've promised

myself that I'll set them up again soon, but I've made such promises before and you shouldn't hold your breath. Actually, this is the time of year for the wonderful Christmas gardens that feature model trains that put my little old set to shame. As Ruth speaks of childhood memories, one of my favorites was the annual trip to the Glen Avenue fire station in Baltimore to see their spectacular Christmas garden!

Of course, it wasn't too long ago that there was an actual railroad running right through our own neighborhood! Not that Stonewall Estates was actually in existence at the time. At its end, the railroad was called the Virginia Central Railway, yet it had about a half-dozen names before that. But call it what you will, there was indeed a rail line laid between Fredericksburg and Orange that passed just to the left of where the O'Toole's house now stands at Stonewall and Halleck. In fact, the right-of-way still exists but now it's just a dirt track. Further along this track, however, evidence of

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the railroad grade remains. On this straight, narrow, and level section of earth, you can still get a sense of the trains that thundered their way out west to make the connection with the Chesapeake and Ohio Line from the RF&P in Fredericksburg. The railroad was conceived in the 1850s in order to make this connection, the impetus being to increase the importance of Fredericksburg as a mercantile center, but things never quite worked out as well as planned. While work was begun in 1853, only the grading had been completed before the Civil War interrupted construction. This is the "unfinished railroad" many of us are familiar with from the maps erected throughout the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park. After the war, ownership of the railroad changed numerous times as the various owners attempted and failed to complete construction before encountering financial difficulties. Eventually, in 1877, rail had been laid all the way to Orange and operations began in earnest. But the revolving ownership continued, as the line never really performed to financial expectations. Finally, in 1938, the Virginia Central Railway ceased operations for the last time and the rails themselves were removed.

But as I have mentioned, the right-of-way is still there. Closer to town, in the Salem Church area, the right-of-way has recently been converted to a park trail. The "Rails-to-Trails" concept is catching on nationwide and wouldn't it be wonderful if we could do such a thing in our own neighborhood?

If anyone has any thoughts on how we might accomplish this or is willing to make the efforts to

find out, please let us know. We at the Gazette wish to do whatever we can to assist the efforts of the neighborhood. And, if anyone knows of a really nice Christmas garden in the area, I'm ready for a return to childhood anytime!

- Gary

(Reference: Fredericksburg to Orange—By Rail, Robert A. Hodge. This publication can be found in the Virginiana section at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library in downtown Fredericksburg.)

HELPFUL HINTS

For those just moving to the area, there are three thrift stores for bakery items—Hostess near McDonald's on Route 1-- Powhatan Street; Schmidt's off Route 1 North (451 Cambridge Street); and yet another on Route 3 East (near town on the left).



- Rosemarie Ziemski
602 Stonewall Lane

BIRTHDAYS

December 5—Cliff English, 8

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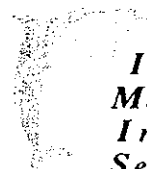
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