

The

Collingtonian

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NEWS & VIEWS

October -- Elderhostel, Eighth Birthday, Regatta, Annual Check up and Halloween

by Frances Kolarek

Even our Earliest Settlers are hard pressed to recall a busier month. Count off the events--many of which are unique.

1. Take the Elderhostel. Ever a ground-breaker, Collington is the first retirement community--as far as we can discover--to sponsor such an event. Details have been rounded up by Layne Beaty in a story on

page 10. Numerous Collingtonians will help see that this event moves along without a hitch. Who better qualified?

2. Then there is the Regatta--another first--at which members of the Solomons Island Model Boat Club will race their hand-built radio-controlled skip-jacks against the Collington Model Boat Club. Charles Trammell, who played such a conspicuous role in getting Collington Lake on the map, is now anticipating the day--October 26--when it will be put to some practical use.

3. The Regatta is a part of Collington's Birthday Celebration which also honors

Prince George's County on its 300th Birthday. Dozens of residents will be on hand to show visitors our flower arrang-

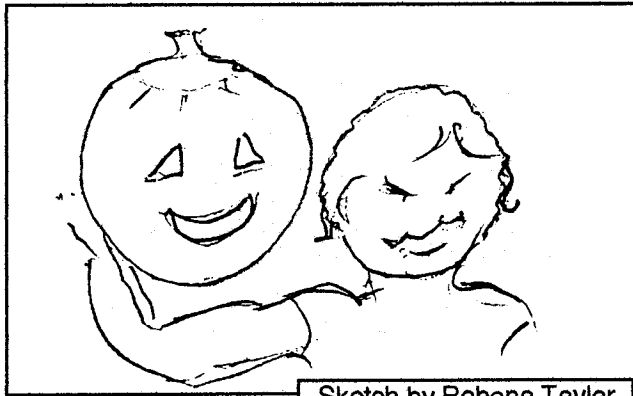
ing capabilities, our basketmakers' skills, the woodshop's expertise and the objects produced by our ceramicists.

A trail walk for visitors will take them past our ancient gravestones. And if they are not exhausted

yet, they can gather at the Lake to see Charlie Trammell demonstrate some unusual model boats--the square-rigged 1812 Baltimore Clipper and a number of other unusual models.

4. We will barely have a day or so to catch our breaths before the Annual Health Check up is scheduled. It has been so tricky to reserve our busy Auditorium that final dates and times will be announced later on.

No, that's not all. Boo! Halloween will be upon us with Trick or Treat, costume parades and all that stuff. Whew!



Sketch by Robena Taylor

•Local Girl Makes Good Move•

During the year and a half Christina Taylor was on duty at the Hostess Stand in the Dining Room a mutual affection grew up between her and the residents she always greeted with a smile.

Now Christina has moved on to other endeavors--working in Administration as Accounts Payable and Payroll Clerk, a job she applied for when it was posted. "After some testing in math-related fields and an interview with Debbie Monroe," Christina says, "they hired me."

Christina's family lives in Foxlake where her father, Keith Taylor, is president of the Community Association. After dining at Collington one evening, Keith suggested to Christina that she apply for a job in the Dining Room as a waitress. Still a high school student, she applied, was hired as a part time server, and in six months had worked her way up to the Hostess Stand. She graduated from Bowie High School in 1995.

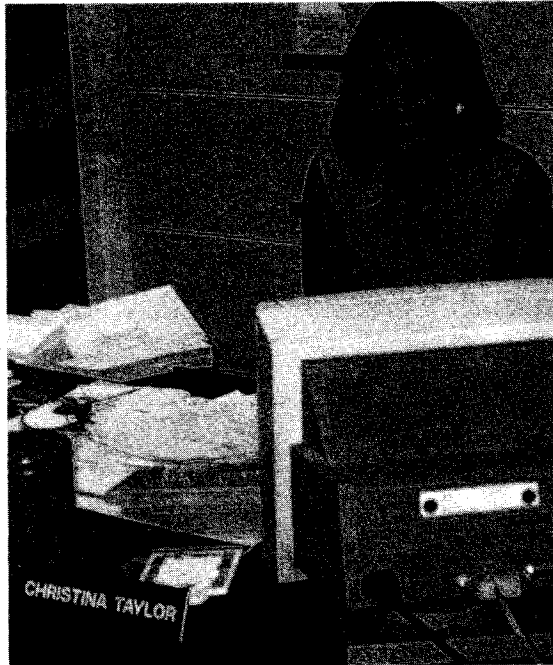
Dad's hand might also be seen in her current job--he bought Christina an Ap-

ple computer when she was 12 years old, and the switch-over to Collington's P.C. equipment presented her with very few problems.

In addition to her full-time duties in Administration, Christina is taking three courses at Prince Georges Community College--Economics, English and Math. It has been a time of many changes in Christina's life. Her mother gave birth in June to a baby boy, Keith Steven, whose pictures are posted above Christina's desk.

You may have noticed that her door is always open. Why? First of all her office is a windowless cubicle. "Besides," she says, "I got to know the residents and I miss

them. With my door open I can see those who come down the hall."



Christina at her desk in Administration

Vacation is broadening,
And I know it is true.
But I've gotten so broad
I've cut out the view.

Phyllis Sternau

Honored:

Collingtonians G. James Gholson and Mildred Ridgely Gray at a Tricentennial Salute Reception in honor of Prince Georgians of the Year from 1988 to 1995. Jim and Mildred were among some 75 who were recognized by County Executive Wayne Curry at Newton White Mansion on September 12.

•Lives in the Library•

by Edward Behr

In the Collington library you can meet a lot of fascinating people. And not just fellow-residents.

On the biography shelves, inviting closer acquaintance, are U.S. presidents from Washington to Clinton, literary lions from Dante to Shakespeare to Dickens, giants of history from Julius Caesar to Henry VIII to Napoleon, and show-business stars from Charlie Chaplin to Barbra Streisand to Bill Cosby.

All these people and many more appear among the 600-odd hardback biographies and the 200-odd paperbacks. Thanks to the generosity of residents and the diligence of the Library Committee, the collection is an impressive one. It includes prize-winners, best sellers and various little-known books that deserve to be better-known. Among recent acquisitions one standout is "The Founding Father" by Richard Brookhiser, describing George Washington the human being among family and friends, rather than as president or general. New, too, are "Clinton, First in His Class" by David Maraniss of the Washington Post (hailed as a "first-rate political biography") and "Hillary Rodham Clinton, a First Lady for Our Time" by Donnie Radcliffe.

Still rather fresh are several autobiographies by others who have been in the news: "My American Journey" by everyone's favorite general, Colin Powell, "It Doesn't Take a Hero" by General H. Norman Schwarzkopf of Gulf war fame, and "Against the Grain" by Russian leader Boris Yeltsin.

Other serious books, new or not so new, deserve attention: "The Trial of Socrates" by I.F. Stone, "Dickens, a Biog-

raphy" by Fred Kaplan ("extra-ordinary," said one critic) and Gregory Howard Williams' "Life on the Color Line--the True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black."

On the lighter side there is comedian George Burns' "All My Best Friends," called "a marvelous collection of anecdotes." And readers can find juicy personal stuff in "His Way, the Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra" by Kitty Kelley and in "Her Name is Barbra (Streisand)" by Randall Riese.

Collingtonians have read and praised a variety of other books including "Scott Fitzgerald" by Andrew Turnbull ("terrific," says one reader), "Harriet Beecher Stowe" by Joan D. Hedrick and "No Ordinary Time," an account of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt during World War II by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

The core of the collection consists of modern classics, published since the 1920s. They range from "Paul Revere and the World He lived In" by Esther Forbes to "Henry James" by Leon Edel to the famous six-volume life of Lincoln by Carl Sandburg to "Black Boy" by Richard Wright, a heart-breaking story of a Negro Childhood and youth.

Then, too, there are the all-time classics. They reach all the way back to the 12th-century "Lives, Amours and Misfortunes of Abelard and Heloise" and Plutarch's "Twelve Lives" which includes Caesar, Cicero and Demosthenes. Written some 2,000 years ago, it is the oldest work on the biography shelves.



Don't overlook the newer collections, which offer some easy, entertaining reading. Alistair Cooke of TV fame has written a one-volume "Six Men," namely Charlie Chaplin, H.L. Mencken, Humphrey Bogart, Adlai Stevenson, Bertrand Russell and Edward VIII. And Jill Ker Conway, the former Smith College president, has assembled "Written by Herself," an anthology drawn from the autobiographies of 25 American women.

Another Author Among Us

Membership in the Collington "club" of resident authors has expanded by one. "Reflections of a Radical Moderate" by Elliot Richardson, the former U.S. Attorney General who is now a Collington resident, was published this past summer. He is the author of two earlier books.

CTV--Catch the Vision

Community Television of Prince George's, which has aired several videotapes featuring Collington and likely will do more, is asking us for volunteers to help answer telephone calls during its pledge drive and telethon on the evening of October 16.

It's a breeze of a fun chore to do and is just a short hike down Lottsford Road from us, at No. 9475. Let someone on The Collingtonian staff know if you can. CTV will publicize our participation, of course. We suspect that they will gratefully accept contributions also from any of us to keep this worthy community service going.

Anyway, tune in Channel 15 B from 6 to 11 p.m., October 16. L.B.

Right in Our Own Backyard

"Kevin, there are some ugly vines in back of the dining room. They ought to come out." So said Barbara Hall, whose long leash attachment to Casey gets her in some unusual places.

"Those are watermelon vines!" our certified horticulturist expostulated. And so they are. Must be that Rich Baker is trying to pare down the expense of our daily consumption of seven, yes seven watermelons. Should get the shaver prize for budgeting.



Rich Baker and Tyrone Batts view the results of a watermelon seed spitting contest?

Quips and Quotes

Census taker: "In what state were you born?"

Citizen: "Nakedness, you numbskull."

Had you noticed: No address here ends with the numerals 13?

•A True Native of Collington•

Gertrude Brown Wallace, resident of Cottage 1112, was born in Collington in Prince George's County. To clarify this apparent impossibility, we have to go back in history to a Collington Meadows plantation located south and east of the junction of Church Road and Old Annapolis Road (Route 450). Over the years the general area came to be known simply as "Collington."

Gertrude's stay in her Collington birthplace was short. "After finishing first grade I went to live with my godmother in Old Bowie and I stayed there until I finished high school," she explains. When it comes to family history she defers to her brother, Richard "Steve" Brown, who lives in Gainesville, Florida.

Steve Brown has written the history of his--and Gertrude's--family beginning with their grandfather, also named Richard Brown, who was born into slavery on the Collington Meadows plantation. It was not until 1865--two years after the Emancipation Proclamation--that he and the rest of Maryland's slaves won their freedom.

With his wife and one son, at age 30, he settled in Collington. Fifteen years later, in 1880, the census lists Richard Brown with wife Marie, five sons and the parents of his wife as a household. And seven years later, in 1887, Mr. Brown had managed to save up \$789.84 to purchase 63 acres of land in Collington.

"It was a remarkable feat that a man who toiled as a laborer, was able to save the money necessary to purchase the land," his grandson writes. Richard first built a log cabin on the land to house his family and "in 1895 he built a two-story

gable roof frame house which is still-standing." Upon his death in 1910 the land was divided between three surviving sons. Gertrude's father, Robert, inherited 19.5 acres.

It was here that the 13 children in the family were born and raised, Steve writes. Their mother, a native of St. Mary's County, had moved to Baltimore where she attended the old Baltimore Colored Normal School, established in 1865. In 1908 this school was moved to Bowie, renamed Bowie Normal School and is now known as Bowie State University.

Today Gertrude's father, Robert Brown would be called an activist. "He organized the parents of the community to raise enough money to qualify for the Rosenwald Funds," Steve, the historian, writes. These Funds were monies made available by a trust dedicated to financing schools for "colored" children.

Both Robert and his wife shared "an interest in and love of education which greatly influenced their children. Five of them completed college at Bowie State University; two sons completed trade school and all finished high school," Gertrude's brother writes. "Our family was very poor but our gifted parents offered vision, and self-determination with strong family and religious values."

The two-room school building Robert helped achieve was finally built in 1927 and replaced the old one-room school built in 1875 to serve the colored children of the Collington area. The two-room building, which still stands at the intersection of Church Road and Old Stage

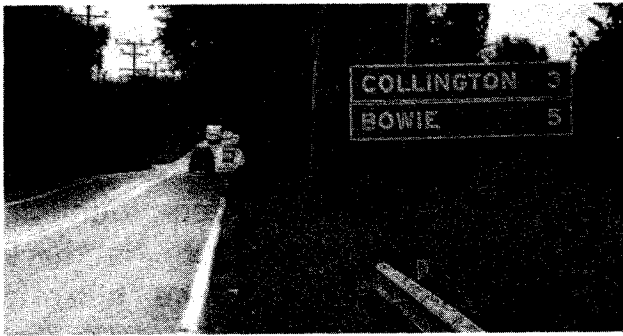
(Continued on page 6)

Road, is now a private residence.

Gertrude Brown Wallace, a graduate of Bowie State University, taught in the schools of Prince George's County for eight years, after which she went to work for the Federal government, retiring in 1973. F.K.

Over There

If you proceed eastward on Route 450 from Enterprise Road, you see very soon this:



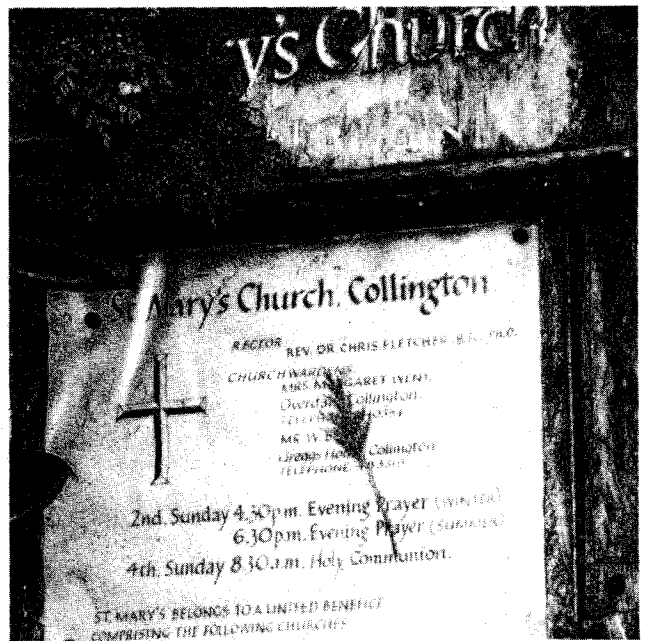
If you measure off the three miles you come to naught but a road intersecting Route 450 with suburban houses on each side.

A query to the State Transportation Division of how come a road sign an-

nounces a town but there's no town, gets a hearty laugh and a "That's all going to change in the 21st Century."

Presumably that sign announces where Gertrude Wallace lived as a child. Now, as Gertrude Stein once said about Kansas, "There's no there there." You can find a Collington Road and a Collington Branch, but no town, despite what the sign says.

To find a town of that name you have to go much further east, to Herefordshire in England, as our intrepid explorer Phyllis Sternau did, and brought back this proof. T.S.



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Right: Suzy, a creature of charm and dignity, scorns questions about her years as "gauche" and confesses only to "un certain age." A Golden Retriever, she was born in the Richardson kitchen and has lived all her life with Anne and Elliot. Suzy is settling happily into her new home in Cottage 1005.

koX koX koX



•Giving Up Driving•

by Bob Willing

Last month The Collingtonian asked its readers for their views on saying goodbye to a beloved activity. Our first reply follows.

I am a good driver except when I am asleep.

The first time this happened to me was back in 1986 as I drove home after dinner with friends. Traffic backed up on Colesville Road in Silver Spring and I suddenly dozed off and hit the bumper of the car ahead of me. My insurance took care of the minor damage to both cars.

The second time I took a catnap behind the wheel was on August 3, 1988, the day I moved to Collington. I had been up since 5 a.m. getting ready for the move. After everything was moved I had a sandwich and debated whether to take a nap before returning to my Silver Spring home where my dog was alone in the house. I did not take the nap but set off at once.

As I neared College Park I realized I was getting drowsy. I moved over to the right lane. The driver of the car ahead of me was driving very slowly in a huge 1978 vehicle. Suddenly, I began to nod off. And then--bang--I hit the bumper of the huge car. A man jumped out and yelled angrily at me. "What kind of a nut are you? Are you on drugs or something?"

I apologized. A State Trooper quickly appeared, said it was a minor accident and he would not charge me but both drivers should drive off the Beltway to the nearest filling station on route 1 and exchange insurance information. We did this and the State Trooper agreed to my

driving home to Silver Spring via Route 193. Very little damage was done to my Honda and I could see no damage to the big car. The driver emphasized that he was taking the only other occupant of the car to the doctor because of a bad knee.

Two years later in April 1990 as I was leaving Collington via Lottsford Road, I was presented with a Writ of Summons from the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Upper Marlboro, by the Sheriff. I had been sued for \$510,000 by the owner of the large 1978 car, by the man driving it (he had borrowed the car) and the passenger.

I was appalled. Both men claimed \$250,000 each for physical injuries and large medical expenses and the car owner asked for \$10,000.

There were many sleepless nights and meetings with lawyers. After two years the case was finally settled a week before I was to go on trial in Circuit Court in Upper Marlboro.

This experience shook up my entire family. I continued to drive the Honda but my family wanted me to stop driving. I did have a tendency to take catnaps.

Finally, I agreed to stop driving. This was one of the most difficult decisions I ever made. When you no longer drive you lose your independence and have to rely on others to drive you or to take taxis or Collington transportation.

But there comes a time when you get older and are more physically disabled and you face a decision to stop driving. I made that decision.

As I say, I am a good driver, except when I am asleep.

•Caregiver to the Community•

Regina Jefferson sailed into Collington early in 1996 and dropped anchor. She recently took time to fill The Collingtonian in on her job and what it involves. Her official title is Assistant Director of Nursing, Community.

That means Regina is responsible for providing nursing services to residents who live independently. Residents who are cared for in Levels I and II will probably not get to know this tall, smiling, friendly woman with a professional air. But those receiving care in their Cottages know her as a warm, caring friend who likes to drop in for a visit and spend a little time. "It's very reassuring," say all the beneficiaries of her care.

Since she arrived Regina has instituted a program designed to inform new residents of the services offered by the Clinic. She waits until a few weeks have passed and the newcomer has his or her feet on the ground. Then she extends an invitation to visit the clinic. She makes sure the resident understands how to call for help in an emergency. And she gives a tour of the facility.

"I hope in this way," she says, "to establish personal contact with residents and fill them in on the kinds of care available at the clinic." Visitors meet Esther Barclay, the RN on duty in the clinic weekdays. On weekends Phyllis Lopez is on duty in the clinic.

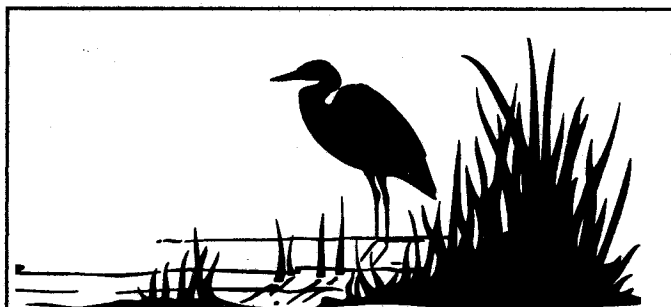
During the tour Regina talks about costs--what the clinic provides without charge and what is billable. And after 45 minutes or so, she leaves the resident with a warm smile and a lot of information to assimilate.

Regina is a native Washingtonian who won her RN at Howard University. She continues to live in the city with her husband. The couple have a grown son who runs a business in Laurel.

She regularly attends Health Committee meetings and is acquainted with its members. "Nevertheless," she says, "there are lots of residents here--people who came in long before I arrived--whom I have not yet gotten to know. That makes me think that an Open House at the Clinic might be a good idea."

The annual health check-up is scheduled for late October, Regina says. Notices are due to go out shortly (see story on Page 1).

Maybe when that is over, she will be able to schedule an Open House. F.K.



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•Needed: A Cure for Bald Spots•

by Anne Cadman-Walker

"Why can't our landscapers grow grass on Collington's unsightly bald spots? What's the problem?"

These questions come often from Collingtonians whose homes face grassless, ugly patches.

"These barren areas could be graphed in a wide, north-south path," comments Judy Mutty, Director of Environmental Services, as Landscape Coordinator Kevin Shaver nods in assent, and he adds, "and the mystery of their existence and possible cures have been frustrating us for eight years!"

The story is one of many consultations, with success only on one patch. It begins in June 1988 in the early days of Collington.

"It was difficult to get grass to grow that first summer," Kevin recalls. "I remember how hot and dry it was. The whole campus was bare, and when it did rain, my job was to scrape the mud off the sidewalks."

Kevin explains that initially the Campus was hydroseeded, a process that used a truck-mounted tank, containing water, grass seed, fertilizer and mulch. However, in some areas, grass was slow to grow and certain bare patches resisted all efforts to get something growing. "Soil tests revealed that these areas were extremely acidic and also contained a high salt concentration. Our landscaping contractor at that time, Lasting Impressions, put down lime. "Still nothing grew," Kevin recalls, "so we put down more lime ourselves."

The Brickman Group, which succeeded Lasting Impressions, dug up six to eight inches of the soil behind Dorothy Skillman's and the Bass' cottages. New soil

was trucked in from outside, and the areas were seeded. Within a couple of weeks grass was growing.

At the Bass cottage, grass continues to grow to this day. But at Dorothy Skillman's cottage, the grass turned yellow and died within six months. Another soil test there showed the pH had returned to 3.5, very acidic.

Three environmental consultants came to theorize about the cause of the soil problems. They came up with as many theories as there were consultants--from "high levels of metals in the soil" to "there's some kind of chemical here." The third company, speculated that underground electric wires were emitting electromagnetic fields. Kevin points out that most of the barren areas have no underground wires nearby.

Collington called in yet another contractor, Handex Environmental Recovery, Inc. Their verdict:

"This is a geologic formation--Marlboro Clay. When oceans laid down deposits this is what was left here."

Original soil drilling records made during Collington's construction are being reviewed so that the current thicknesses of the formation can be determined.

Kevin, summarizing where they now stand, says what Judy Mutty told the last Community meeting: "We have to design a way to dig out the soil and deal with the hard pan. We may have to install underground drainage. Of course, we'll need to get an estimate on how much all of this would cost. . . and that, in turn, has to be approved and fitted into the budget."

Collington Welcomes Elderhostel Guests

At press time the countdown for the Elderhostel at Collington October 13-18 was right on schedule.

Collington residents will be allowed to register for the lecture portions only of the courses which will be held here. (\$50; see Judy Reilly.) For the off-campus study sites later trips may be arranged for residents. The lectures will be repeated later this year for residents.

Elderhostel visitors will be housed in the nearby Holiday Inn, will have meals here and will be bused to study sites. Residents Emily Baker and Chuck Dell will be on duty all week to facilitate logistics.

Residents are invited to participate in the 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. receptions in the Clocktower Gallery for the visitors during the week and to assist them in tours of our facilities and/or look at apartments and cottages.

Details of the weekly program have been arranged by Collington's Executive Director, Gail Kohn, and a committee of Prince George's County residents. L.B.

Did You Know?

Helen Bellman reminds us that copies of three books by a former resident, Bob Miller, may still be available in the Opportunities Outlet Shop. One is a book of poetry called "Promised Land," another is called "Lightening with Laughter," poetry and meditations to combat the frustrations of aging, and a novel with some people and places in Collington recognizable in it. His widow, Margaret, lives in the apartment building.

Four to the Fore



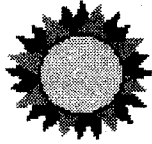
"Tulley" Torbert, Frank Nelms, Ken Muldoon and Roger Dixon

Our Leaders on Television

Executive Director Gail Kohn and Residents Association President Ruth Dixon participated recently in the videotaping of a half-hour discussion on care for the aging with two officials from the office of J. Joseph Curran, Jr. Maryland's attorney general.

It covered a range of topics including official regulations, mistreatment of patients, fraud and considerable complimentary comment about Collington and its eight-year history.

The program, taped by Community Television of Prince George's County is "A Different Look," produced and moderated by Stacey Cohan. It will be aired on Channel 15B each Thursday in October at 4:30, 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. TV sets at Collington can receive this channel. L.B.



Paintings Adorn West Wing

An exhibit of some of the work Josephine Thoms has accomplished is the latest to liven the walls of the West Wing Gallery. She has studied, taught and practiced art extensively and has many degrees and honors. She is a long-term member of the Maryland Federation of Art and was its president in 1972-74.

The exhibit on our walls ranges over a gamut of styles, sizes and techniques, including oils, acrylics, watercolors and oil and acrylic. A placard gives the titles, the techniques for each and the sale price.

A Joysome Threesome

One is unlikely to encounter a more unusual trio than *Il Trittico*, with soprano, trumpet and piano. They brought a high level of musicianship befitting their Peabody Institute training, where they met. From the 18th Century through the 30s and 40s of the present one they carried the audience to a rousing final selection of jazz standards that had nostalgic heads bobbing and feet tapping and enthusiastic applause to wind it up.



"Season of mists and mellow
fruitfulness!"

John Keats "To Autumn"



Lord Buttons of Collington is a Bichon frise, a breed of dog immortalized in several of Goya's paintings. Buttons, who is indifferent to his cultural heritage, is still a puppy and a pretty small dog to have such a hefty name. His owners, Mary Jane Cullinane and Kay Martin of Apartment 208/210 say Buttons will probably never exceed 12 pounds in weight--hardly enough of him to go around to his many fans.



Biggest and Litt'lest



Josephine of Billingsley is a ten-year-old Yellow Labrador who recently moved to Cottage 1206 from a range of four acres in Davidsonville. Frances Meloy, her owner, says "Josephine is the gentlest of creatures" and is adapting beautifully to the change in scene. She appears to be the picture of contentment.

October: a time when there is a chill in the air, and mulled cider on the hearth before an open fire. It is Fall, named for what leaves do in this season. Just out there, and back a ways in time, Mr. Norman Rockwell is capturing the traditional scene. H. Sapiens, beginning its annual hibernation, sits with a warm glass in one hand and an Agatha Christie in the other, the cat on his lap, the dog at his feet, and the fire down to a deep glow. He is ready to do a little thinking. It is a New England scene. October makes New Englanders of us all, not forgetting the Skyline Drive, of course, and other places that are rumored to have trees.

Our advice to H. Sapiens would be that it is wise to think with care. The thoughts of autumn can be subversive to the equanimity of the mind. It may be wise to keep a short rein on thinking in any season in which leaves are falling. They remind us too vividly of unfinished business. "Should have got that done!" says the ash, the poplar, the sycamore, the maple, as the branches lock up for the winter. Only the oak, a Late Faller, is supportively silent. Autumn is hard on procrastinators. It takes a courageously unrepentant off-putter to relax as the beauty of autumnal leaves strikes the conscience. Why do we rebel at raking leaves? Because they are an accumulation of reminders.

On the other hand, Autumn is precisely the time for Serious Thinking. The Universe is badly in need of major revision, due to postponed maintenance. It may be too late for trivial chores, but now is the time to plan ahead, the time to devise new contracts with humanity, the time to throw the rascals out (as God did with Lucifer--see Milton). Consider such mat-

ters as the effect of Black Holes on the American family. Ask not what you can do with DNA, but rather what DNA can do to you. Reflect for a happy moment on whether or not the media is (are) really necessary. And if imagination fails, remember that It Takes A Universe.

The fire burns. Dog twitches in a dream, Cat opens a sleepy eye, and H. Sapiens thinks. Before ice and snow bring their paralysis, the Great Autumnal Transition marks the end of something, the beginning of something else. It is our annual opportunity to engage in the joy of surmising, of suggesting a few essential changes in our cosmic arrangements. Nature has provided this season as a time for the long view. Forget short-term proposals; most of them are disastrous, and winter will, speaking accurately, nip them in the bud. No one has ever planned the doing of tomorrow's chores when sitting before a fire.

And what better month for this than October, for this is the month in which the world was created--on October 23, 4004 B.C. at 9:00 o'clock in the morning. That was the finding of Bishop James Ussher, a scholar and Archbishop of Armagh, who published this useful information in 1654. He was a bookish man, and founded a great library in Dublin where he placed the Book of Kells. His contribution to cosmic chronology is open to question, but anyone who founded a library can't be all bad. I think he would have taken the notion of the Big Bang in his stride. "That's just what it was," I can hear him say.

In October, ten billion years ago.

Clem Welsh