

The Collingtonian

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February 2000

Philosophy Can Be Fun

By Glendy Pabst

Without intending to, Cuba's Fidel Castro actually did a great favor for Collington. It happened in 1960 when a Cuban banker was ordered by Castro to surrender the content of all private storage boxes in the bank's vault.

Instead of complying, Sr. Francisco Juarrero quickly phoned his customers to come and pick up their treasures. Then he booked five plane tickets to Miami.

Thus it was that 13-year-old Alicia Juarrero became an American. Now, 39 years later, she conducts one of the most popular courses offered to Collington residents by Prince George's Community College. Absences were rare in her Collington classroom last semester despite the austerity of her subject: philosophy. Her success in relating the ideas of Plato and Aristotle to everyday life accounts for her popularity, not only at Collington but at the College, where she has taught for 24 years.

Despite the Spanish syllables in her name, Professor Juarrero considers herself primarily American. By way of proof, she cites her remote ancestor,

Juan Ponce de Leon, who helped discover Florida, where she herself was largely educated. Later, a great-grandfather, Nestor Ponce de Leon, became a publisher in New York while exiled from Cuba during the Spanish-American war. In our century, her father graduated from New

England's Choate prep school and from Yale. Little Alicia had actually studied in private schools in Havana before the family's exodus from Cuba, but in America her father thought public schools would teach American values along with reading and math.

In philosophers' language, the study of values is called ethics, and that discipline underlies the noisy dispute over a more current Cuban emigre, the six year old boy. Alicia says she understands the sentiments of Miami's vocal refugee colony (to which her mother still belongs), but as a philosopher she believes that custom and moral law support the father of young Elian Gonzales.

Years ago, Professor Juarrero's specialty as a graduate student lay in the



Professor Alicia Juarrero at her Collington blackboard.

field of ethics.

Her doctoral dissertation at the University of Miami examined the moral justification underlying most behavior. She is, however, far from being a dour moralist. Quite the contrary, in fact. Laughter can often be heard in her classroom, and dissenting opinion encouraged, so long as the reasoning behind it is sound.

In more recent writing, Professor Juarrero has returned to the basic field of metaphysics. Last year her studies produced a fat, learned volume titled *Dynamics in Action*, published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press. Although well-received by philosophy-minded colleagues, Professor Juarrero acknowledges that she may not have a best-seller in hand. To her students at Collington and at the college, who have signed up for a new semester, sales are fortunately not a measure of this professor's worth. For them, it's sufficient that she herself is indisputedly dynamic.

Woodshop Angel

By Anne Cadman-Walker

Do you have an Angel?

We have one. He didn't know that he was one. But each time he turns up when some impossible task needs performing. Unexpectedly, he appeared at first as a member of Collington's woodshop crew.

The first time, we had a rolled up Venetian blind just about an inch too wide for its porch window. He took the blind with him. Within a few days, he returned with the blind now the right width! Amazing.

Then, more recently, we had another, indoor, flexible, vertical blind which functioned by turning it two ways as needed. It had come loose from its attachment to the top horizontal bar.

The angel came and developed a new part to insert. It worked!

Then, alas, a careless action by someone broke the blind off.

The angel came again, and using an old lottery ticket as a base, constructed a new part which fit the top of the blind--and lo, it worked. The blind could again function.

As if this were not enough, the angel also walked me through my computer. Thus I found hidden messages, read them and replied.

We won't tell you his name because no sturdy male from the woodshop wants to be known as Angel. But that's what he is.



"Cherry Blossoms?" Well, no.

The "Know Your Neighbor" speaker for February 11 will be Dr. Ainslee Embree.

Sharing Faith with Florida

Resident author, choreographer, landscaper Faith Jackson will hit the lecture trail in Florida for ten days in February. Her book, *Pioneer of Tropical Landscape Architecture--William Lyman Phillips in Florida* is the story of a landscape architect deemed by the famous Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. "the best student he ever had at Harvard." His career flowered in the heyday of great homes surrounded by luxuriously landscaped grounds.

Faith became engrossed in Phillips' work when she lived in South Miami where her late husband taught at the University.

She will lecture in Naples, at the Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales, at the McKee Botanical Garden in Vero Beach and at the Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami.

School Says Thanks

Season's greetings and thanks for Collington support for grocery store receipts last school year have come to Fannie Jeffrey and other members of our Outreach committee from the staff of Judge Woods Elementary School (formerly Dodge Park).

Giant and Safeway receipts totaled \$168,165.55, including \$65,520.54 worth from Collington residents (tallied by Jim Marshall). School supplies, etc., redeemed with these receipts included a printer, copier, scanner, SIP drive-storage, bean bags, CD Roms, die cuts and a junior hop spring ball.

A Big, Big Man

Let's say it was his "BIG" moment. Conducting the Prince George's Philharmonic in *The Stars and Stripes Forever*.

But everything about Ken Muldoon was big--size, heart, laugh, devotion to Collington. His presence was everywhere--dramatics, entertainments, group singing, worship services, emceeding parties. A former president of the residents association, nothing seemed really "official" until he got there.

After a short illness, Ken died on January 21. Memorial services were held here on January 23. His decade-long role won't be replicated soon.

Outreach Studies

Eugene L. Meyer, Washington Post staff writer who wrote a worthy article about life at Collington for the Post last year, will speak here on February 10 about Prince George's County Today.'

His talk will be the third in a series called "Prince George's--Past, Present and Future" arranged by the Outreach Committee to help us better understand the county we live in, says Sue Embree, chairman of the *ad hoc* committee charged with finding interesting speakers. Detailed announcements about the talk will appear in the weekly Courier.

Mr. Meyer has covered the Chesapeake Bay area for the Post for several years and authored a handsome picture book. He is currently assigned to the Prince George's weekly section in the Post.

New Books in the Library

By Edward Behr

Last fall's sale of surplus library books has paid off handsomely--with the proceeds used to buy 20 new books now added to the shelves.

Among the notable new novels are several by established names. *Falling Slowly* by Anita Brookner tells the story of two sisters entering middle age. The *New York Times* said Henry James would have given it "complete approval."

Another winner is *Blue at the Mizzen* by the late Patrick O'Brian, the last of his 20-volume series on life in Britain's Royal Navy in the early 19th century. The columnist George Will has called O'Brian "the greatest historical novelist of his era." Ever popular, too, is Reynolds Price, the North Carolina professor who has authored more than 30 books. Now he has produced *Roxanna Slade*, the fictional biography of a woman from age 20 to age 90.

Another brand of fiction is *The Love of a Good Woman*, a collection of short stories by the admirable Canadian writer Alice Munro. She writes of the tension and deceit under the surface of polite society. The *Times* called the book "superb, dazzling" and likened it to Chekhov.

Then there are new mysteries by big-name writers. Margaret Truman has produced yet another Washington shocker, *Murder at the Library of Congress*, sure to please her fans. Martha Grimes scores again with *Biting the Moon*, recounting the heroine's abduction and the search for her abductor in an inhumane world of trapping and staged hunts. A *Times* reviewer rejoiced: "Martha Grimes doesn't write them fast enough for me." Scott

Turow's *Personal Injuries* tells of a successful lawyer who bribes judges, gets caught and then cooperates with the law. And Tony Hillerman's *Hunting Badger* focuses on two Navaho crime-busters who find themselves at odds with the F.B.I. over a back-country manhunt.

Impressive new biographies give us the life stories of some familiar names. In *Morgan, American Financier*, author Jean Strouse recounts the life of the nation's most famous banker. One critic called it "an extraordinary accomplishment filled with the vitality of the biographer and the fascination of the subject." None other than presidential contender Bill Bradley offers readers (and voters) a memoir called *Time Present, Time Past* including an inside look at the Senate's workings. Historian David McCullough called it "marvelous." Another celebrity, Mrs. Lyndon Johnson gets her due in *Lady Bird* by Jan Jarboe Russell. Based on rare conversations with Mrs. Johnson, it portrays her as a political force and provides personal details about her marriage.

One autobiography demands particular attention--*Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen* (subtitled *Reflections at 60 and Beyond*) by the prize-winning novelist Larry McMurtry, author of *Lonesome Dove*. It's a portrait of small-town life in Texas.

And there's one offbeat offering worth a close look. This is *Despicable Species* by Janet Lembke, which describes some of the earth's most loathsome creatures, including the starling, horsefly and cowbird, plus the rampaging kudzu vine. One critic calls it "a charming, thoroughly readable book."

Still more additions to the shelves, too numerous to include here, demand a look. All are marked on the back by a bright-red semicircle. Happy reading!

Not So “Unripe”

By Layne Beaty

When the youthful Richard Van Wagenen and a Hollywood high school pal climbed a fence into the United Artists studio lot where “The Thief of Baghdad” was being filmed they were discovered and escaped. “On a flying carpet,” he says.

He could have used one as a frequent flyer later during a long and much traveled career in academe, military government in Germany and looking after far-flung World Bank loans.

Lucidly recounting just a few highlights of his three-theater career he only superficially gave support to the announced title. “Unripe At Any Age,” when he delivered the January “Know Your Neighbor” lecture.

Dick grew up in mining camps of the West, attending many elementary schools along the way, ending up at Hollywood High, then went on to university and graduate studies at Stanford and Syracuse.

In what may have been the first (1933) transatlantic live radio debate his

Stanford team met Cambridge as they competed with static to argue the merits of democracy vs. dictatorships.

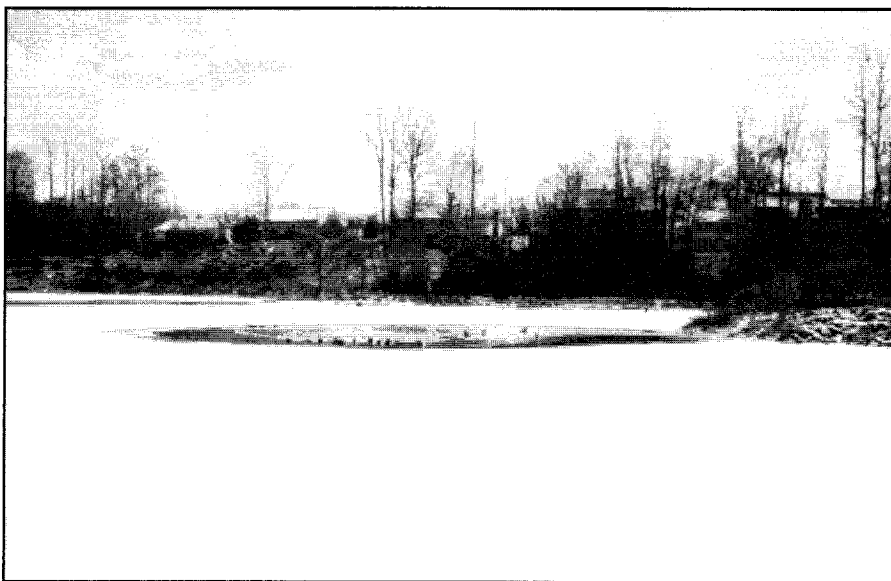
His appointment to a Yale faculty position was short-lived, coming only five days after WWII broke out, but it served him well toward his postwar series of posts with five universities, including the National War College.

His ROTC military training at Stanford was helpful to his military career and his “most interesting job in the military government of the American sector of occupied Berlin, from 1945 to 1948, which provided many entertaining stories of relations with his Russian counterparts.

After heading the Center for Research on World Political Institutions at Princeton, Dick joined the World Bank in 1965, serving 15 years with missions to dozens of countries. He and Jean came to Collington in 1988.

The Plight of the Swans

After the third day of below freezing temperatures the swans’ universe had shrunk to the point of serious concern for their ability to feed themselves. Their usual practice of upending and poking around the lower depths wouldn’t work in the deep water to which they were confined. Pat Tracy was debating his rescue options: break a path through the ice somehow? Push food over the ice to them? But fortunately the thermometer climbed and the swans’ universe expanded enough to let them reach shallow water, and emergency measures could be shelved. TS



Close quarters for geese and swans.

The Interview

As a service to our readers who may not have attended the New Year's Eve celebration, or who, though present, were unable to hear some of the skits, we present here excerpts from *The Interview*, written by Bill Simpich.

Bill: Well, to what am I indebted for your visit?

Int: I want to interview you for *The Collington*.

Bill: Why?

Int: Because you're the only resident who will never be invited to speak at "Know Your Neighbor."

Bill: Your research is embarrassingly accurate.

Int: I understand that you, like several others here, went to Annapolis.

Bill: That's true--but it's better known as The Severn River Small Boat and Barge School.

Int: Did they give you a good education?

Bill: No way. They gave me stuff to memorize.

Int: How long were you in the Navy and what rank did you achieve?

Bill: I served 42 years and retired as an Ensign.

Int: What accounted for that no-growth?

Bill: My annual fitness reports said I suffered from "ences."

Int: Ences? What are you talking about?

Bill: I was charged with insouciance, indolence, cognitive impairments, arrogance and shiphandling incompetence. And I hadn't married a rich wife!

Int: And after retirement, you were

hired by a distinguished New York City public relations firm?

Bill: Indeed. As you well know, the Government calls that function "Public Affairs." I've always been chagrined that both expressions, "Public Affairs" and "Public Relations" suggest tawdry and even scandalous public behavior.

Int: What sort of writing assignments did you get in your new career?

Bill: Challenging stuff!

Int: Like what?

Bill: One client was a major hotel chain and I wrote the text for its laundry lists.

Int: What do you remember best from that thrilling period?

Bill: Looking back, I regret I couldn't employ the new and useful communication expressions widely used today.

Int: Like what?

Bill: Well, for example, the following terms were then unknown: Hopefully...A defining moment...Mindset...A chilling experience.

Int: What other expressions were you denied?

Bill: That opinions can have a "disconnect" and that suggestions can be "cobbled together."

Int: But moving on from your illustrious business career, what do you like best about Collington?

Bill: My mattress.

int: What do you like least?

Bill: Housekeepers rousting me from my mattress at noon!

Photos in this issue, as well as many others, are by our multi-talented staffer, Tom Street.

By Their Signs Shall Ye Know Them

By Tom Street

Anyone interested in learning how to identify trees in winter by their bark would do well to visit the small clearing on the Collington Trail opposite Cluster 2000, the area that once held Mary MacMartin's wildflower garden. There, Pat Tracy, Collington's grounds manager, has placed attractive small signs reading, respectively, Boxelder, Black Walnut, Slippery Elm, Eastern Red Cedar and Sassafras. Nice touch.

The trees these signs identify are small specimens. To get an idea of what they will look like when full grown, one can turn to an appreciation of the riches of our heritage in unspoiled nature that Ed Behr wrote for the June 1998 *Collingtonian*. He takes us on a walking tour, reveling in our "splendid, sometimes overlooked trees." He points out the great oaks bordering our entrance road, and then on the Collington trail near the burial ground stands "a classic vase-shaped American elm, a survivor of the dreaded Dutch Elm disease."

Our little Slippery Elm, despite its proud sign, will not look like that. Despite sharing part of the elm name, it will not assume the elegant proportions of its noble cousin. However, the mucilaginous inner bark it produces is used medicinally in cough drops. Not too shabby.

Farther along on the path as it dips to the East, Ed points out "an impressive ash-leaved maple." This is another name for our little Boxelder, sporting its neat sign. It is indeed part of the genus *Acer*



that includes many maples. Its wood is soft, however, unlike that of some maples and is used for cheap furniture and pulp. As Ed continues his stroll along the trail he notes many splendid trees, pears, pawlonias, majestic oaks, tulip trees, locusts, ashes, a huge beech, river birches and red maples in the wetlands, and finally, past the lake, along the south side of the trail, "stand two mighty black walnut trees almost as wide as they are tall."

Bingo! That is something for our little sign-bearing black walnut to aspire to. Black walnuts have been the foremost cabinet woods of North America since colonial times. Their wood is used for furniture, interior paneling, gunstocks, musical instruments and other choice purposes. Ed did not mention two of our sign-bearers, American Red Cedar and Sassafras. They don't achieve enough size to rate the "splendid" label. In fact "cedar" is a misnomer for what is properly called a Juniper. Its familiar red wood is reputed to warn off clothes-moths and may be found lining closets and "cedar chests."

The Sassafras, while always fairly small, is noteworthy for other reasons. It is a member of the laurel family, and was one of the first American plants to command the attention of European settlers. They exported it to the old world as a high-priced panacea. Its aromatic bark is still occasionally used for medicinal tea and its pulverized leaves for soups and condiments. Ever eat some "filé gumbo" in New Orleans? The filé is pulverized sassafras leaves.

Elliot, The Regular Guy

By Layne Beaty

At a community of elder contemporaries such as ours, the grim reaper is, by nature, a frequent and familiar caller, mourned losses though his visits bring. Only in unique circumstances does *The Collingtonian*, a monthly organ devoted mainly to happier reporting, take specific notice of these passings.

Something more seems justified to mark the departure of a resident, active up to the end, a four-time cabinet rank official, an ambassador and the famed "hero" of a widely publicized resignation on a matter of principle which led to the only presidential resignation in U.S. history.

So it was with Elliot L. Richardson, who came to Collington in 1996 with his wife, Anne, and a golden retriever named Susie. He and Anne became a familiar sight in the dining room, together carefully selecting viands from the steam table and conversing with friends.

Before Anne left us last summer she sang with our chorus and swam often in our pool. She and Susie were regular walkers on the perimeter road. Elliot was a familiar hailer of the 11 o'clock shuttle to the Metro several times a week headed for his downtown law office. Advancing Parkinson's disease never throttled his friendly enthusiasm despite some painful tumbles.

He remembered our names, laughed at our jokes, responded to little courtesies, won some spelling bees, told an audience of his early preference for politics over the family tradition of careers in medicine, and showed us how to propel a

wheelchair with his feet at an alarming speed.

Eleven days before he died on a visit to his native Boston, Elliot dressed up like an imperial Russian count and participated in our gala Christmas costume party. A regular guy.

Fittingly, his passing became international news on December 31 and immediately set off a cascade of tributes in the media. About 40 Collingtonians joined an estimated 1,000 mourners at his memorial services held in the National Cathedral on January 15.

Still More Birds

A month ago *The Collingtonian* proudly reported that three more species of birds were seen here in 1999. But since that report two more have been added to our list, bringing the 10-year total to an impressive 159.

One newcomer was a yellow-crowned night heron, seen on the lake by Tom Street in very late December. This is a chunky gray long-legged bird rarely seen this far north in winter. Most of these herons go south, to Florida and the Gulf Coast.

The other find was the duck called a greater scaup, spotted on the lake by Ed Behr in early January. It has a greenish-black and whitish body--looking a little like a smaller version of our familiar mallard. When flying, the scaup shows a distinctive white wing stripe. It summers in northern Canada and winters along the Atlantic Coast from Newfoundland to Florida.

E.B.

A Painter in Our Midst

By Kay Swift

To enter the apartment of Leland and Rita Austin is like entering a room in the National Gallery of Art, hung with large handsome paintings on every wall. And the artist? Lee Austin, himself, a self-taught painter, some of whose paintings do indeed hang in art museums in Texas--in Austin and Port Arthur and in the Houston area where his exhibits won prizes in three shows. It was from Houston that he and Rita came to Collington in April 1998.

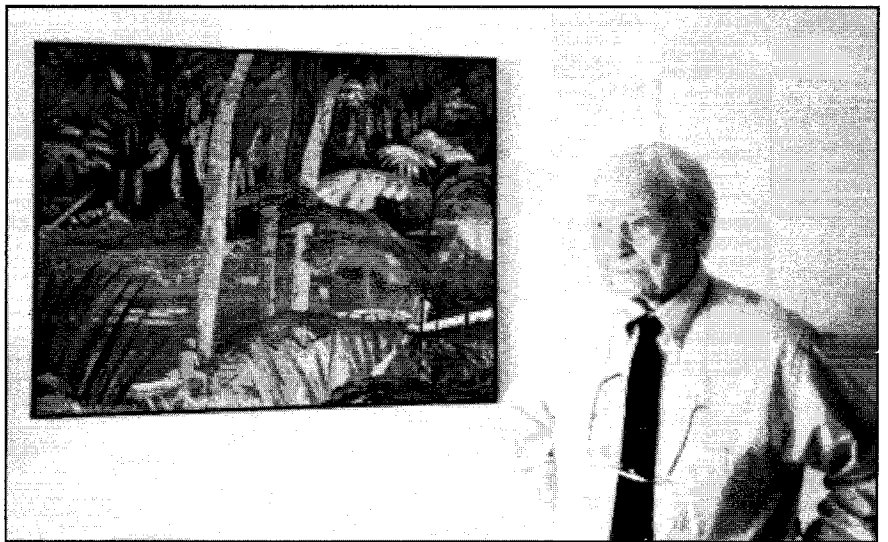
For Lee, painting has been an avocation, a relaxation from his work as a marketing analyst for Gulf Oil Company. A graduate of Syracuse University with a major in philosophy, he came to Gulf in New York City in 1939. There he met Rita and they were married in 1942 just before he left for World War II where he became captain of an LST (Landing Ship, Tank) in the Pacific.

After the war he returned to Gulf Oil, working in New York, in Pittsburgh and finally in the Houston area, but always with a strong urge to paint. He studied art books and visited art museums to satisfy his inner need. When he turned a room in his house into a studio he began painting with acrylic rather than oil paint because it is odor-free and dries faster. Acrylic can also be used on paper as well as canvas.

His subjects were usually taken from experiences on various travels--in Brazil, California, Texas, etc. He often took snapshots of scenes that attracted him

and later recreated them at his easel.

The painting shown here is of a park in Rio de Janeiro. Many of the paintings have been sold or given to their daughters. But he has retained some favorites. Approaching his mid-nineties, Lee no longer paints but he and Rita continue to enjoy his personal art gallery in their apartment.



Leland Austin with one of his paintings.

Don't Dial 9 plus #

If someone asks you to do it, hang up. It would be a scam to open up your line to unauthorized long distance calls anywhere in the world, any time. Some such calls have been made, saying it was a test of the line. Phony.

Welcome, Erato, the Muse

Collington's Poetry Group, begun this year by Charles Dell and assisted by Faith Jackson, will welcome its third published poet, Martin Galvin, 62, of Chevy Chase, Md. Galvin will read poems from his book, *Wild Card*, at 3 p.m., Monday, February 7 in the Courtyard Conference Room. Other published poets reading here have included Ann Knox and Elissa Ritchie. Collington poetry lovers--about a dozen so far--meet monthly. They bring and read selections based on themes they choose. Newcomers are welcome. Call Charles Dell, Ext. 7582, for more information. C.D.

June in January

Collington's almost-perennial pansies have bloomed famously so far this winter, much as usual. But the rather gentle weather through mid-January inspired some other plants to flower out of season. In one cottage garden both rosemary and primroses kept on blooming--and rosemary, originally a Mediterranean plant, is often vulnerable to our winters. E.B.

This Just In:

Faith Jackson has received an engraved invitation from Florida inviting her to hear herself speak there this month. She plans to accept.

February Poem

O Mourning dove, O Mourning dove
You are a silly bird
In February snow
On a frozen bough
Your spring time voice is heard.

Long, long ago on a Pittsburgh hill
You built in a flimsy tree.
The children found
An egg on the ground
And brought it back to me.

You'd many a nest in our front yard
That tumbled from out the tree.
You'd failed to fix
Its brittle sticks
In Washington D.C.

O Collington, O Collington
When spring is not quite here
You'd send to me
On my own roof tree
The dove I love to hear.

Daphne Carter

Collington
10450 Lottsford Road, Mitchellville, MD 20721.
Phone: (301) 925-9610

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Layne Beaty, Editor

Publishing: Aline Grayson, Frances Kolarek.

Editorial Board: Edward Behr, Frances Kolarek, Tom Street.

Should She be Called “Chairperson?”

Karen Cheney, office manager in Administration, has all those chairs to fill while staff goes to lunch or attends to jobs away from the desk. Add the recent rash of flu cases to the problem.

When Priscilla Atkinson is on leave from the Clocktower desk, as she was recently, Karen must put another staff member in her place, leaving their job uncovered.

She has come to rely heavily on willing residents to answer telephones and direct visitors to their destinations both at the reception desk in Administration and at the Clocktower station.

On Saturday, when the mail arrives, a group of volunteer residents report for duty at the Clocktower to handle packages and anything else that comes up. . Emily Baker, Maude Cahill, Mildred Wyckoff, Leila Wilson, and, until recently, Mabelle Pease, take turns on Saturdays.

Ingrid Soper is a dedicated filler-inner. “What else would I be doing?” she asks. Her favorite location is the reception desk in Administration where Phyllis Sternau and Gertrude Mitchell also cover at lunch time.

Two faithful substitutes at the Clocktower desk are Jeanne Dulinsky and Becky Elefante, both of whom have developed the knack of pushing the right button on that complicated telephone array.

Such duty is not without pressure. And there is always somebody standing, waiting for an answer to a question like “Where’s the trip book?” or “What’s Helen’s mail box number?” And the inevitable inquiry: “Has the mail arrived yet?”

Anybody got a patience pill?

We’ll Save The Collingtonians for Her

Carrie Fein, our Fitness room and pool manager, is planning to walk the 2,160 mile Appalachian trail beginning on March 15. Five years ago she read an article about the delights and rigors of this test, and the idea took hold of her. “Now, she says, “I decided the time had come to do it.” Carrie has been granted a six-month’s leave of absence and Kathy Tizol will fill in during her absence.

She will start at Mount Springer, Georgia, the southern end of the trail, and finish the trip at Mount Katahdin, Maine, the northern end. She expects to spend the spring and summer on the trail, about six months altogether.

She will carry everything in a backpack and sleep in shelters along the way. “These are three-sided shelters,” Carrie explains. “No running water, no TV...”

She plans to start out with one pair of boots, although she says most people use up two pair on the trip. When she needs a replacement, she will stop in one of the towns dotting the trail and get a new pair at an outfitter.

Will she be completely cut off from us for six whole months? “Oh, no. When I get to a phone I’ll call my mom, and friends,” she promises.

Carrie ran and finished the Marine Marathon last year. For her, walking 2,000 miles is a stroll in the park. Some park!!!

Laughing is good for you. It feels like jogging on the inside.

The Wicked Flea



The rest of the story:

Thirty days hath September
April, June and November.
The rest have thirty-one
Excepting February alone
And it has twenty-eight days clear
And twenty-nine in each leap year.

Chaucer: The Clerk's Tale

An off-campus friend, a new grandparent, is seeking to put together a book about grandparenting. He invites us to submit interesting short pieces on the subject that might be publishable. No fees, though.

In its millenium roundup of good and bad things TIME magazine says that the "Who's On First?" old Abbot and Costello baseball spoof is "not only the most famous but the best comedy routine of the century." That's the one that Art Longacre and Layne Beaty performed at our New Year's Eve party. It was first done in a 1938 film.

Remember "Too soon old, too late schmart?"

We once belonged to a commiserating group of contemporaries that issued an occasional round-robin newsletter called "The Late Smart Gazette." Full of wisdom.

Hannah Crosswhite received a rousing round of applause in appreciation for her many years managing the residents association office when her resignation was announced at the residents council meeting last month. Gertrude Mitchell and Mildred Wyckoff have taken over those duties.

Several Collingtonians thought it interesting recently that Betty Clark, still very lively among us, is listed on a family gravestone in an Upper Marlboro churchyard by birth date and part of the date when she would become a tenant thereof. (19--.)

Betty explains: "The reason my name and birth year are on my parents' stone in Trinity cemetery is simple. Marble stone discolors easily and needs professional cleaning. Once I thought to be efficient and had the cleaner add my name and birth year." Like many computer makers, she had not planned beyond 1999. And we thought the Y2K bug was dead.

When Art Longacre sat down at a 2:30 meeting on January 18 in Gail Kohn's office with other members of the Residents Association Executive Committee, it was his fifth meeting that day!

Bob Willing relays a greeting from wife Marion's hospital bed that she hopes to lip-synch "Ten Cents a Dance" for us again.
